

Meanwhile, at Moperville North...

SQUEE!

SQUEE?

I'M SORRY,
BUT IT'S JUST SO
COOL! YOU'RE A
REAL LIFE SUPER
HERO!

YEAH, AND I
HAVE TO BE
A GIRL WHILE
BEING ONE.

I KNOW YOU'RE NOT HAPPY
ABOUT THAT, BUT IT'S STILL
JUST REALLY COOL!

REALLY?

YEAH! AND YOU LIKE
THE FLYING, RIGHT?

HELL YEAH, BUT...
YOU REALLY THINK
THIS IS COOL?

OF COURSE! AND BESIDES... WELL, THIS
IS A LITTLE EMBARRASSING, BUT I'VE
ALWAYS FANTASIZED ABOUT BEING LOIS
LANE, AND NOW, I SORT OF AM!

WOULDN'T YOUR
SISTER BE LOIS LANE?
I MEAN, SHE'S THE
REPORTER, AND--

WITHDRAWN.



CHEERLEADRA...
I CAN'T BELIEVE
THEY DUBBED HER
CHEERLEADRA...

YEAH! THAT'S, LIKE, A *SIDEKICK'S*
NAME! THEY SHOULD'VE CALLED
HER "CAPTAIN" SOMETHING!

CAPTAIN TINY SKIRT!



...WHAT? I DON'T HAVE
A LOT TO GO ON.



FIGURES SHE'D BE A *CHEERLEADER* SUPER
HERO. GOTH SUPER HERO? NO, OF COURSE NOT,
BUT A *PERKY BIMBO* HERO? OF COURSE!



TO BE FAIR, A
GOTH SUPERHERO
WOULD PROBABLY
BE TOO APATHETIC.

WHAT'RE YOU,
STUPID? *BATMAN'S*
GOTH.



OH. MY. GAWD. DO
YOU THINK SHE HAS
POMPOM BLASTERS?

I BET HER CHEERS
CAN MESMERIZE
PEOPLE, TOO!

OOH! WHAT IF SPELLING STUFF OUT
WITH HER BODY MADE STUFF HAPPEN?



CAN I MAKE A
CHARACTER LIKE THIS AT
OUR NEXT GAME NIGHT?

BUT I WANNA
MAKE THIS
CHARACTER!

GIRLS, PLEASE! WE CAN HAVE A
SQUAD OF CHEERLEADER HEROINES.

In ze time of lunch...



SO, YOU GOING ON PATROL AFTER SCHOOL?

I'M NOT DOING PATROLS. BESIDES, I'M PLAYING BASKETBALL WITH NOAH.



IS THERE ANY CHANCE OF YOU GETTING A MALE SUPER HERO FORM? OR AT LEAST A BETTER OUTFIT?

GRACE THINKS I'LL GET MANLY SPELLS IF I POSE IN GIRLY FORMS IN FRONT OF A MIRROR, BUT I DON'T THINK THAT'S REALLY REFLECTIVE OF ME.



YOU WEREN'T DOING THAT ALREADY?

WELL, NO. IT'S *WEIRD*. AND I WAS WORRIED ABOUT LOOKING LIKE PEOPLE I KNOW.

SO WHAT IF YOU DO? YOU'D KEEP IT TO YOURSELF, RIGHT?



SARAH, YOU'RE CHASTISING A MAN FOR SHOWING RESTRAINT. HE SHOULD BE *PRAISED*.

BUT THAT'S LIKE *MONKISH* LEVELS OF RESTRAINT. IT'D BE HEALTHIER FOR HIM TO INDULGE A LITTLE.



HOW IS BEING MATURE UNHEALTHY?

HE'S BEING REPRESSIVE!

HE CAN SHOW RESTRAINT AND NOT BE REPRESSED!

TOO MUCH RESTRAINT IS REPRESSION!



NOT MORPHING INTO WOMEN FOR KICKS IS TOO MUCH RESTRAINT?

DON'T YOU REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS LIKE BEING A TEENAGE GUY?

I TRY NOT TO, AND BESIDES...

SO THAT'S WHY YOU BROUGHT YOUR COAT TO LUNCH.

...ATTENTION, LISTENERS! WE'RE ABOUT TO DO A CALL-IN POLL! DO YOU THINK THAT CAH-RAY-ZAY FIRE MONSTER AND SUPER HEROINE YESTERDAY WERE REAL?

CALL US
OR VOTE
ONLINE...

...SO MY NEIGHBOR
SAYS IT'S FAKE.
"STRINGS FROM THE
TREES", HE SAYS.

FEH. DANG FOOL
THINKS THEY FAKED
THE MOON LANDIN',
TOO.

EXTRA EXTRA!
WEIRD FREAKY STUFF
TOTALLY REAL!

GIVE ME BACK MY
PAPER, YOU LITTLE...

For Reals!

...AND THE VOTES ARE IN! 80% OF OUR
VOTING LISTENERS BELIEVE THE FIRE
MONSTER AND SUPER HERO ARE REAL,
AND 18% ARE UNDECIDED! MY, MY...

OH. AND
THERE'S A
2% MARGIN
OF ERROR.

I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU
COULD PRETEND TO BE
SOME RANDOM PERSON
WHO DOESN'T BELIEVE
IN MAGIC FOR A WHILE,
LAVENDER...

I WOULD BE
ANYTHING
FOR YOU.

WHAT?

NOTHING!

After school, the Salty Crackers Comic Shop parking lot...





THE... THE
BACK STORY?



THE TRUTH ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON,
WHERE THOSE POWERS CAME FROM,
WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH THE WEIRD
STUFF IN THIS TOWN, *EVERYTHING*.



BUT I DON'T REALLY
KNOW ANYTHING!



AND EVEN IF I DID, ISN'T
NOT KNOWING THOSE
SORT OF SECRETS SAFER?

OH, YES, OF COURSE! THAT WAY,
I CAN HAVE THE *MAGICAL SHIELD*
OF *IGNORANCE* TO PROTECT ME!



LOOK, IT'S OBVIOUS YOU DON'T WANT
TO TELL ME, AND I'VE GOT CLASS
TONIGHT, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO LET UP
ON THIS. WE'LL TALK MORE TOMORROW.



BUT... I
DON'T...



SAVE IT, JUSTIN. I KNOW
THIS MUCH. YOU MAY AS
WELL TELL ME THE REST.



WELL, CRAP.





OKAY, THAT'S GOTTA BE MELISSA,
BUT DON'T BE QUICK TO JUDGE.



I'VE NEVER MET HER BEFORE. ALL I KNOW
IS THAT SHE DID ONE BAD THING. WHO
HASN'T DONE ONE BAD THING BEFORE?



OF COURSE, HER BAD THING WAS
BETRAYING MY FRIEND'S TRUST AND
TELLING THE ENTIRE SCHOOL HE'S GAY.



JUSTIN WASN'T EVEN ABLE
TO TELL HIS PARENTS
ABOUT IT ON HIS TERMS
BECAUSE THEY OVERHEARD
THE GOSSIP SHE STARTED.



HE WAS
MISERABLE AND
DEPRESSED AND
IT WAS ALL
BECAUSE OF
THAT STUPID—



ELLIOT! THIS
IS MY FRIEND,
MELISSA.



HELLO.

UM...
HI?



UH, SORRY I CAN'T STAY AND
GET TO KNOW YOU BETTER,
BUT I'VE GOT A LOT OF
HOMEWORK TONIGHT

YOU TWO HAVE
FUN NOW

SO

WHAT WAS
THAT ABOUT?

WHAT WAS
WHAT ABOUT?

THAT LOOK YOU GAVE
MELISSA I KNOW
HATE WHEN I SEE IT

NOT THAT EXPERTISE
WAS REQUIRED.

IT'S
NOTHING.

IS IT JEALOUSY? I HAVE BEEN
TOLD I COULD MAKE STRAIGHT
MEN SEE RAINBOWS.

WHAT? NO
I--WAIT
THAT'S AN
EXPRESSION?

I MIGHT BE
MISQUOTING
SOMETHING.
SO WHAT IS
IT, THEN?

I'M FRIENDS
WITH JUSTIN.

OH.

YOU KNOW
HALF OF A
SAD STORY

SHE TOLD EVERYONE JUSTIN
WAS GAY SHE BETRAYED HIM.
WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO KNOW?



SHE TOLD
ONE PERSON.



ONE?



MELISSA HAS KNOWN
JUSTIN SINCE THEY
WERE CHILDREN SHE
THOUGHT THEY WOULD
GET MARRIED ONE DAY

WHEN JUSTIN TOLD
HER HE WAS GAY SHE
WAS DEVASTATED

SHE NEEDED TO
TALK ABOUT IT WITH
SOMEONE OTHER
THAN JUSTIN.



THAT ONE PERSON WAS
HER OLDER SISTER.



OH...



WHO PRIOR TO GRADUATING
WAS MOPERVILLE SOUTH'S
MOST NOTORIOUS GOSSIP



OH.



I DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE BEST FRIENDS, BUT IT STILL SOUNDS LIKE SHE SCREWED HIM OVER.

HOW COULD SHE NOT KNOW TELLING HER SISTER WOULD BE A BAD IDEA?

I AM NOT SAYING SHE DID NOT MAKE A MISTAKE. IN FACT THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT I AM SAYING

SHE MADE AN ERROR IN JUDGMENT WHILE TERRIBLY UPSET

I GUESS. BUT DOESN'T SHE STILL BUG HIM ABOUT DATING?

MUCH TO THE DISMAY OF ALL CONCERNED YES. IT IS A COMPULSION, AND IT MAKES HER FEEL LIKE A FOOL

JUSTIN HAD A RIGHT TO BE UPSET, BUT IT HAS BEEN TWO YEARS. THE PAIN WILL NOT END FOR EITHER OF THEM UNTIL THERE IS FORGIVENESS.

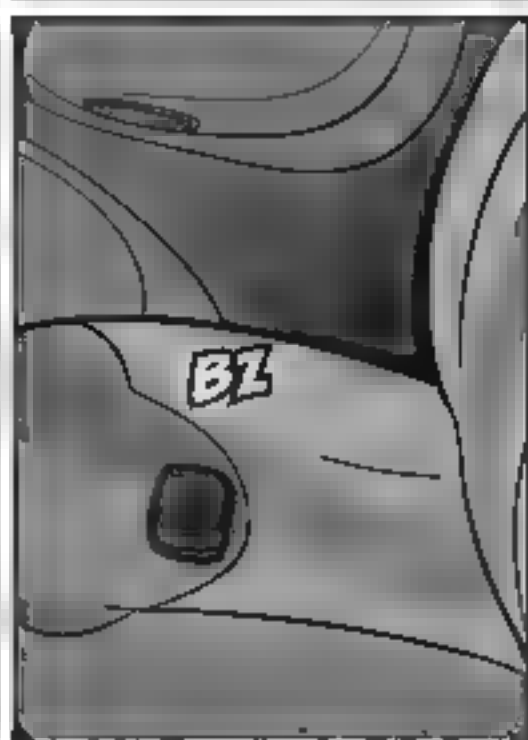
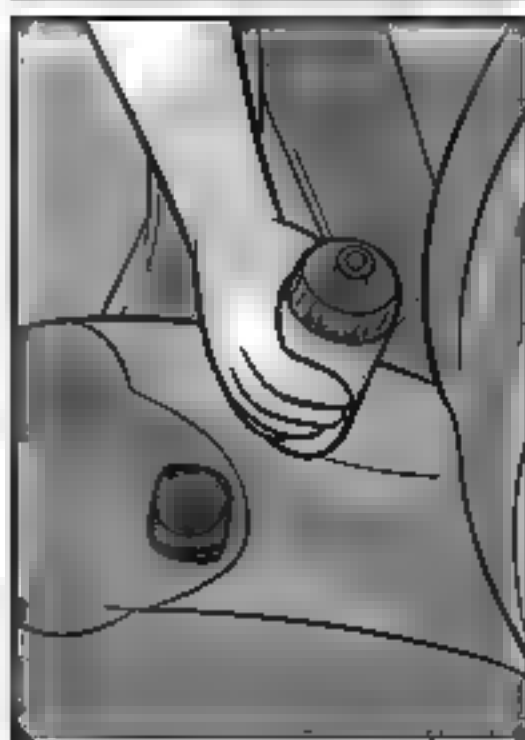
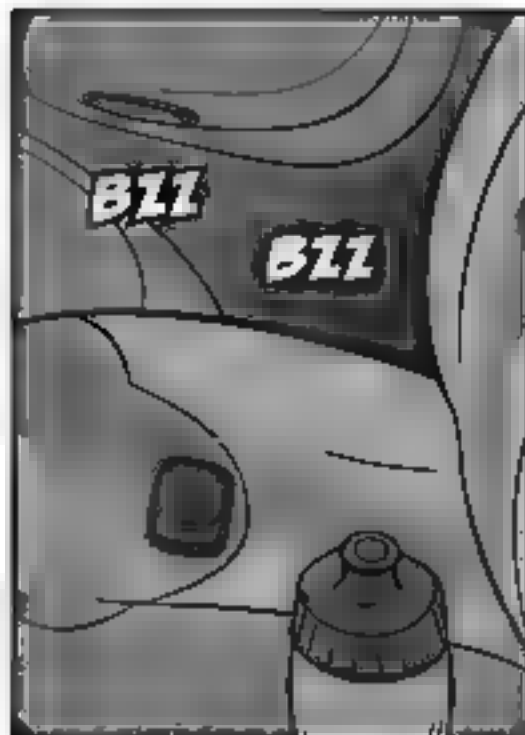
I AM CERTAIN SHE WOULD STOP IF HE FORGAVE HER.

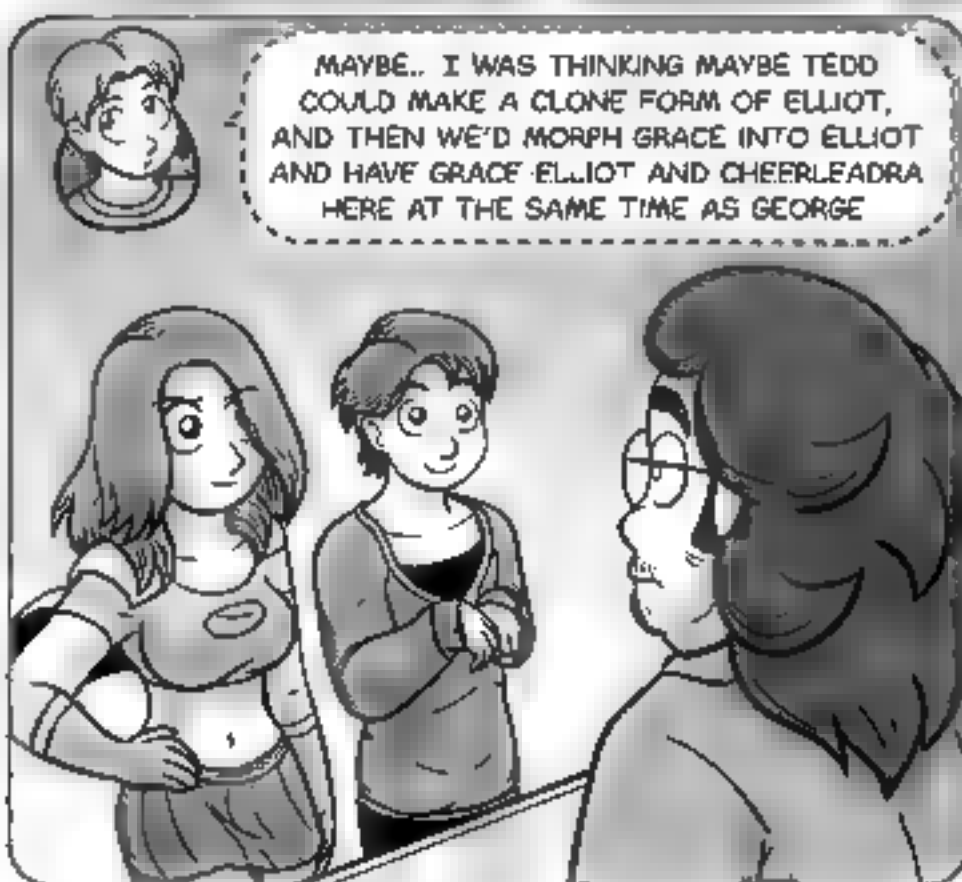
THAT'S... A PRETTY BIG THING TO FORGIVE.

THERE ARE DEEDS THAT SHOULD NOT BE FORGIVEN MALICIOUS ACTS PERFORMED WITHOUT REMORSE FOR WHICH VENGEANCE SHOULD BE CALLED UPON THE PERPETRATOR.

BUT MELISSA WAS A FRIEND WHO MADE A MISTAKE. AND FRIENDS FORGIVE MISTAKES.

SHALL WE PLAY NOW?





SERIOUSLY
THOUGH.
THAT'S NOT
A GOOD IDEA.

ANY SUCH SHENANIGANS
WOULD PROVIDE GEORGE WITH
MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO
OBSERVE AND DEDUCE MORE,
AND GEORGE IS NOTHING IF
NOT OBSERVANT

BESIDES WHICH YOUR
SOLUTION HAS POOR
ELLIOT GETTING SCANNED
AND HIS FORM MADE OPEN
SEASON FOR GRACE

CONSIDER
THE VARIOUS
AFTERMATHS
OF THAT



KITTY-
KITTY-
KITTY



SO! IS
THIS ALL
ACCURATE?



THIS PLAN
COULD STILL
HAVE VALIDITY

I DISAGREE. A PLAN THAT
HINGES ON GRACE PASSING FOR
ELLIOT IS DOOMED. SHE'S FAR
TOO "BUBBLY" AND UPBEAT



I. HATE
EVERY-
THING.





DID YOU SAY
SOMETHING GRACE?

UM NO NOTHING IMPORTANT WHAT DO YOU
THINK THEY'LL DO WHEN THEY FIND WHOEVER
SUMMONED THAT NOT-FIRE FIRE THING?



MY DAD SAYS THEY'LL TRY TO HIT
HIM WITH A SLEEP SPELL AND TAKE
HIM IN FOR QUESTIONING. ANYTHING
HE'S SUMMONED WILL GO AWAY IF
THE GUY'S UNCONSCIOUS. SO
THAT'S THE SAFEST OPTION.



WHAT IF THE
SLEEP SPELL
DOESN'T WORK?



THEY.. MIGHT HAVE TO
USE DEADLY FORCE IF HE
RESISTS CAPTURE IT'S NOT
WHAT THEY WANT TO DO.
BUT IT COULD HAPPEN.



WELL... WELL, GOOD! IF
SOMEONE GOES AROUND TRYING
TO KILL PEOPLE. THEN THEY
DESERVE WHAT THEY GET!



SO MUCH OF WHAT I'VE READ IN HISTORY BOOKS
SEEN ON THE NEWS, AND WHAT I'VE EXPERIENCED
FIRST HAND SUGGESTS THAT THE WORLD IS BETTER
OFF WITHOUT CERTAIN PEOPLE



I EVEN TRIED USING MATH TO PROVE MYSELF
WRONG, BUT I STOPPED CALCULATING AFTER
REACHING A THOUSAND SEYMOURS.



SEYMOURS?

A UNIT OF MEASURE FOR SADNESS
USING THE "JURASSIC BARK" EPISODE
OF FUTURAMA AS A BASELINE

GOOD LORD! I DIDN'T THINK
THAT MUCH SADNESS WAS
POSSIBLE



I CAN FIND TONS OF REASONS
WHY KILLING OFF MURDEROUS,
EVIL BAD GUYS WOULD BENEFIT
THE WORLD, BUT EVERYTHING I
FEEL TELLS ME KILLING IS
WRONG, NO MATTER WHO IT IS.

I EVEN FEEL BAD THAT THE
SUMMONER MIGHT DIE. HE
TRIED TO KILL OUR FRIENDS,
AND HE WON'T GET KILLED
UNLESS HE TRIES TO KILL
MORE PEOPLE! WHY SHOULD
I CARE?



BECAUSE YOU'RE EMPATHETIC,
AND POSSIBLY A HIPPIE

THAT DOESN'T MEAN
I HAVE TO DO DRUGS
NOW, DOES IT?



NO, I DON'T THINK THAT
WOULD END WELL FOR ANYONE

MAYBE I AM A
HIPPIE, BUT I HAVE
THE POWER TO HELP
PROTECT PEOPLE
FROM SCARY STUFF



IF I WANT TO DO
THAT AND NOT KILL
ANYONE, THEN
THERE'S SOMETHING
I HAVE TO DO

GRACE!
WHAT'S UP?





JUSTIN WAS TERRIBLY DEPRESSED AND ALONE AND MELISSA WAS GUILT-RIDDEN AND HORRIBLY SAD AS WELL YOUR SAVING JUSTIN RESULTED IN NEW FRIENDSHIPS AND PURPOSE FOR HIM.

AS JUSTIN CHEERED UP SO DID MELISSA. SHE SORT OF WENT FROM DEPRESSION TO DELUSION, BUT IT WAS STILL A STEP UP

I JUST SAW AN UNFAIR FIGHT AND STEPPED IN.

I'M REALLY NOT

IT IS LIKE YOU ARE TRYING TO MAKE ME MAN-HUG YOU

I HATE TO ASK THIS OF YOU BUT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT I SPEAK WITH JUSTIN.

IT IS NOT ABOUT MELISSA, BUT HE DOESN'T BELIEVE ME COULD YOU TALK TO HIM?

I DON'T KNOW THAT'D BE PRETTY AWKWARD.. WHAT DO YOU NEED TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT?

I WISH I COULD SAY BUT I HAVE MADE CERTAIN PROMISES. I AM NOT LYING, HOWEVER. WHEN I SAY IT IS IMPORTANT

OKAY I'LL MENTION IT TO HIM.

THANK YOU.

NOW LET'S SEE IF WE CAN MAKE THIS A FORTY-FORTY GAME BEFORE I HAVE TO GO HOME FOR DINNER.

Twenty total points later

I'M GOING TO FIND
SOMEWHERE TO LAY
DOWN AND DIE.

I REALLY NEED TO FIND
OUT WHERE HE TRAINED

GUESS I SHOULD CALL
HOME AND TELL THEM I'M
ON MY HM? VOICE MAIL?

YOU HAVE

TWELVE

NEW MESSAGES

Twelve messages later

ELLIOT! WE HAVE
A PROBLEM.

YES. I KNOW
IN EXCRUCIATING
DETAIL

YEAH. SORRY I
WAS A BIT FRANTIC
EARLIER. SO WHAT
SHOULD WE DO?

CLAIM IGNORANCE HE DOESN'T
ACTUALLY KNOW THAT MUCH. AND
NOBODY WOULD BELIEVE HIM IF HE
TOLD THEM ANYWAY

WHY IS EVERYBODY SO
OPPOSED TO MY WACKY
HIGH-JINKS SOLUTION?

THE "WACKY"
PART FOR ONE
WAIT WHO ELSE
HAVE YOU TOLD?

SUSAN WAS
HERE EARLIER.
SHE AGREES
WITH YOU

OKAY GOOD SO
YOU'RE NOT GOING
TO TELL HIM
ANYTHING?

YEAH. SURE. HE'S
JUST GOING TO KEEP
PESTERING ME BUT I
CAN PUT UP WITH IT

THANK YOU JUSTIN.
UM SO LONG AS WE'RE
TALKING I KINDA NEED
TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT
NOAH

WHAT



I MET NOAH AT
SWEDEKEA RECENTLY
AND WE BECAME
FRIENDS BEFORE I
HAD ANY IDEA YOU
TWO KNEW EACH
OTHER.

I HOPE
YOU'RE OKAY
WITH THAT



OH... WELL,
I'D BE LYING IF I
SAID I WAS HAPPY
ABOUT IT

WHAT DO YOU
GUYS EVEN HAVE
IN COMMON?



WE'VE MOSTLY JUST PLAYED
BASKETBALL AND RACED

NO WE'VE
PRETTY MUCH
BEEN EVEN

I ASSUME
YOU'VE BEEN
KICKING HIS
ASS.



EVEN?!

YEAH, AND I CAN'T
SHAKE THE FEELING THAT
HE'S GOING EASY ON ME



ANYWAY I TOLD HIM THAT I
KNOW YOU AND HE ASKED ME
TO TELL YOU THAT HE HAS
SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO TALK
TO YOU ABOUT

I'M NOT
TALKING TO
HIM ABOUT
MELISSA.



HE SAID IT ISN'T
ABOUT MELISSA.

WHY ELSE
WOULD HE TALK
TO ME?

I DON'T KNOW HE WAS PRETTY INSISTENT
THAT YOU SHOULD FORGIVE HER BUT HE TOLD
ME THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT



YOU TWO TALKED ABOUT
ME AND MELISSA?

SORT
OF BUT

I SHOULD
FORGIVE
HER?

UH.







MSHS. Thursday Morning



..YOU'VE BEEN
TALKING TO ELLIOT

OF COURSE
I HAVE

I'M SORRY BUT HE TALKED TO
NOAH ABOUT ME BEHIND MY
BACK AND THEN HE TELLS ME
NOAH MADE GOOD POINTS ABOUT
FORGIVING MELISSA?

HOW DID HE
EXPECT ME
TO REACT?!

THEY TALKED ABOUT YOU AND
MELISSA BECAUSE ELLIOT BRIEFLY
MET MELISSA AND COULDN'T HIDE
HOW ANGRY HE WAS AT HER FOR
WHAT SHE DID TO YOU!

HE... WHAT?
HE DIDN'T
SAY--

I DON'T DOUBT THAT
ELLIOT PUT HIS FOOT IN HIS
MOUTH. I DON'T CARE IF YOU
FORGIVE MELISSA, AND I GET
THAT YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF
ANGER TOWARDS HER.

BUT THAT IS NO EXCUSE TO TAKE IT
OUT ON YOUR FRIENDS. ELLIOT MIGHT
NOT GET HOW MUCH HE'S DONE FOR
YOU BUT BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY I'VE
TAKEN A GOOD HARD LOOK AT HIS LIFE
AND HE DESERVES BETTER FROM YOU!

I... YOU'RE
RIGHT I'M
SORRY

OH NO. YOU WANT THINGS
TO BE COOL BETWEEN US?
APOLOGIZE TO ELLIOT, AND AT
LEAST FIND OUT WHAT NOAH
WANTS TO TALK ABOUT

COULDN'T I JUST
APOLOGIZE TO ELLIOT?

OKAY FINE

I'LL CALL ELLIOT
BEFORE CLASSES
START

THANK
YOU.

I'M NOT SURE WHEN I'LL
TALK TO NOAH, THOUGH.

RIGHT
NOW'S A
GOOD TIME

WHAT?

HI!

GAH!

WHERE'D YOU
COME FROM?!

I HAVE BEEN WAITING TO POUNCE FROM THE
SHADOWS. AND WHILE I DO WISH YOU WOULD
FORGIVE MELISSA. I UNDERSTAND WHAT IT IS
LIKE TO HAVE SO MUCH ANGER.

REALLY

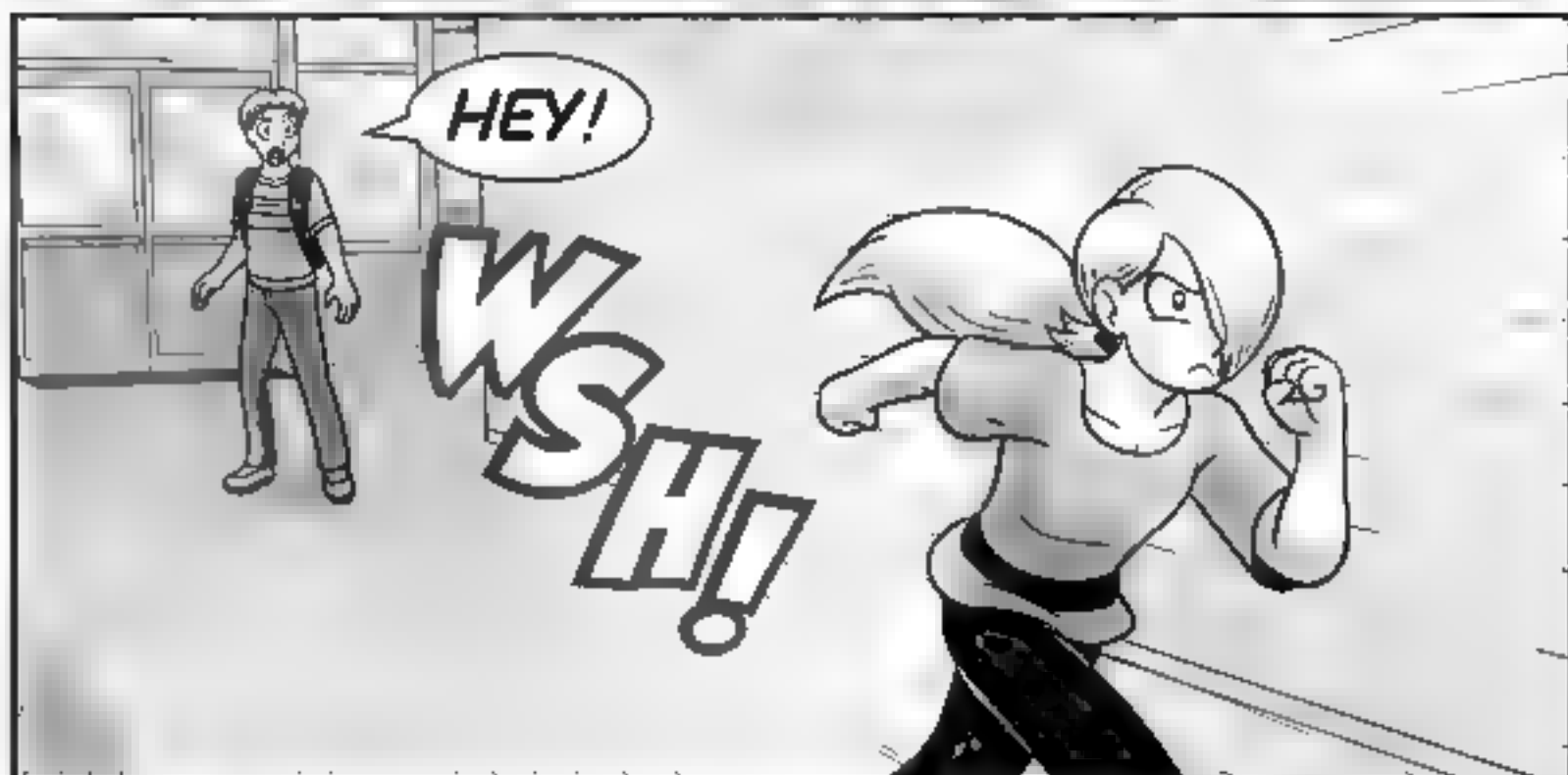
OH YES. THE ENTIRE REASON
I SPEAK WITH SUCH CARE
IS THAT THE ADDITIONAL
CONCENTRATION NEEDED
HELPS ME FOCUS AND NOT
LOSE MY TEMPER.

BUT YOU'RE
SO... TIMID.

I AM GOOD AT CONTROLLING MY TEMPER
NOW BUT I WAS SUSPENDED ON MY FIRST
DAY OF HIGH SCHOOL FOR BEATING UP TWO
SENIORS WHO WERE PLAYING KEEP-AWAY
WITH MY BACKPACK

I HEARD THEY
ARE OFFENSIVE
LINEMEN ON A
COLLEGE FOOT-
BALL TEAM NOW
WHATEVER THAT
MEANS

BUT SUCH THINGS
ARE NOT WHAT I MUST
DISCUSS WITH YOU.



WSH

WHAT THE ?

HUH?

WSH

HM?

OH. IT'S
THAT WEIRD
GIRL.

HEY!

WSH

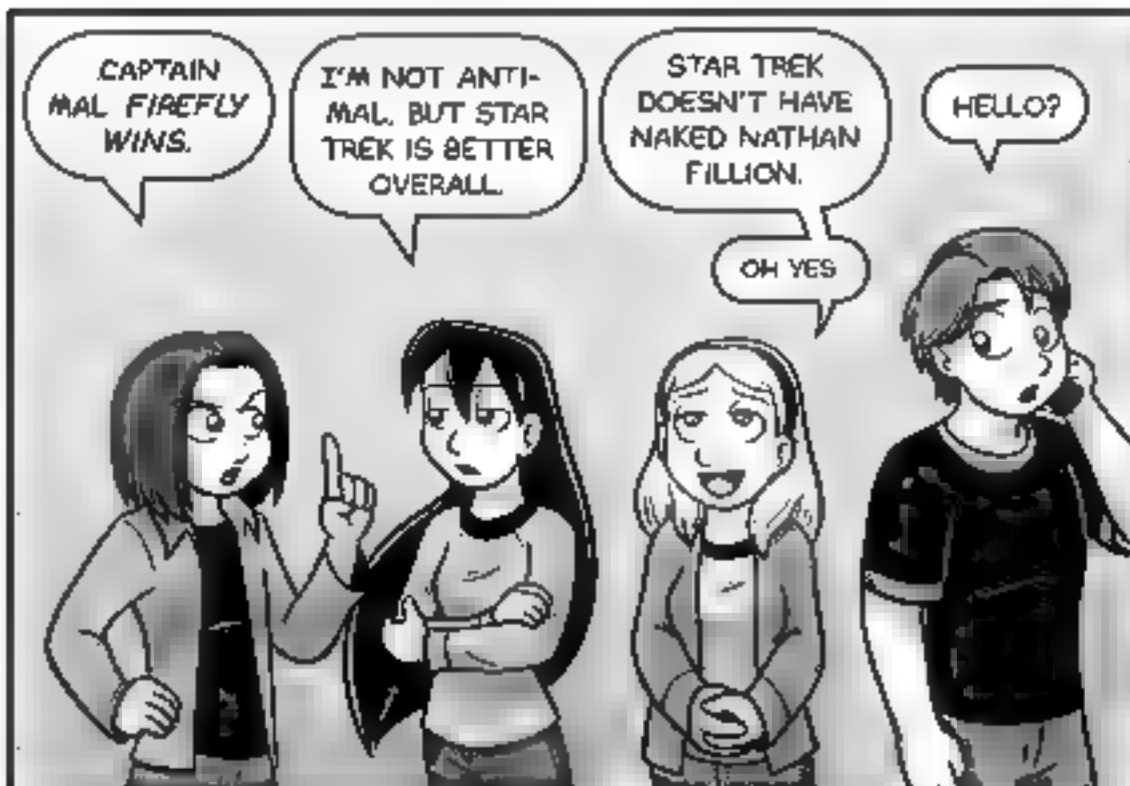
ZA?

WHAT'D YOU
DO POINT OUT
HOW RIDICULOUS
HIS HAIR IS?

EH. YOU TRIED.

I'M SORRY DID
I DO SOMETHING
WRONG?

I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING! HE
JUST RAN OFF LIKE A DOG
WHO SAW A SQUIRREL!





MY CAR GOT SMASHED
THE GUARD RAIL BY THE RIVER
GOT SMASHED. AND PEOPLE
PROBABLY GOT SMASHED AFTER
WATCHING THE FIGHT VIDEO!



I COULDN'T HAVE PREPARED
ANYONE FOR THAT! I DIDN'T
KNOW SOME FIRE GUY WAS
GOING TO SHOW UP AND I
HAD TO FIGURE OUT WHAT
TO DO WHEN IT DID!



FAIR ENOUGH. BUT THAT'S NOT
ALL THERE IS TO IT I DON'T
KNOW HOW MUCH YOU AND
YOUR BOYFRIEND KNOW BUT--

HE'S NOT MY
BOYFRIEND!



HE
WHAT? HE'S
NOT?

NO! HE'S NOT
EVEN GAY HE
HAS A GIRLFRIEND
AND EVERYTHING.



ANYWAY SO CRAZY STUFF
HAPPENS AROUND HERE IT'S
ALL SO UNPREDICTABLE AND
WEIRD THAT PEOPLE WOULD
HAVE TO PLAY IT BY EAR NO
MATTER WHAT!

WHAT MAGICAL
TRIVIA DO YOU
THINK I HAVE THAT
WOULD MAKE ANY
DIFFERENCE?



WHAT? OH.
UM, SURE.
GOOD POINT

I--WHAT?
REALLY?



YEAH. WHATEVER. I THINK THOSE
KIDS PLAYING CARDS BACK THERE
ARE HAVING A RULES DISPUTE I'M
GOING TO GO SORT IT OUT

ALRIGHT, WHAT
ARE YOU BRATS
ARGUING ABOUT
NOW?

WHAT?
WE WEREN'T
ARGUING.

SURE YOU
WERN'T



HUH



"ICKY"? I NEED TO SPEAK WITH GRACE ABOUT HER VOCABULARY

KER-
CHUNK

SIR
RAVEN!

NOAH WHAT HAVE I TOLD YOU ABOUT CALLING ME "SIR"? YOU SHOULD CALL ME "MR. RAVEN" AT SCHOOL, AND "ADRIAN" OR "RAVEN" ANYWHERE ELSE

BUT I
KNIGHTED
YOU

YOU DON'T HAVE THE
AUTHORITY TO KNIGHT PEOPLE.

MORE IMPORTANTLY WHY ARE YOU STILL HERE AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP THERE?

I AM HUNTING
FOR A SHADE
I SAW THIS
MORNING.

A SHADE?

I THINK IT WAS A SHADE
MAYBE A WRAITH? I WAS
ABOUT TO TALK TO JUSTIN
WHEN I SAW IT FROM
ACROSS THE HALLWAY

I HAVEN'T
HEARD ANYONE
MENTION SUCH
A THING.

IT WAS ODD. NO
ONE ELSE SEEMED
TO NOTICE IT

ARE YOU
CERTAIN YOU SAW
SOMETHING?

I WAS BUT
NOW I AM
CONFUSED

AND YOU STILL
HAVEN'T SPOKEN
TO JUSTIN?

UM.

ASKING JUSTIN THOSE QUESTIONS IS IMPORTANT, NOAH.

I KNOW BUT I SAW A SPOOKY THING!

SPEAKING OF VOCABULARY YOU ONLY SAW THIS SHADE? IT DIDN'T DO ANYTHING ELSE? SET OFF ANY OF YOUR OTHER SENSES?

YOU THINK I IMAGINED IT?

NO I THINK YOU HAVEN'T HAD ENOUGH TO GO ON AND YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME ABOUT IT SOONER YOU'VE BEEN ON A WILD GOOSE CHASE AND IN THE MEANTIME JUSTIN HAS GONE UNQUESTIONED

IT MIGHT BE BEST IF I JUST TALK TO HIM MYSELF

WHAT? NO!

THWUMP

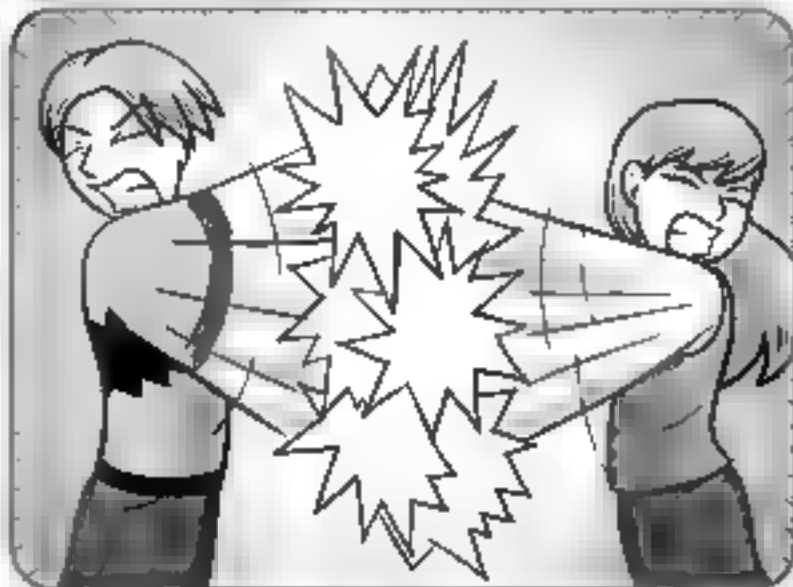
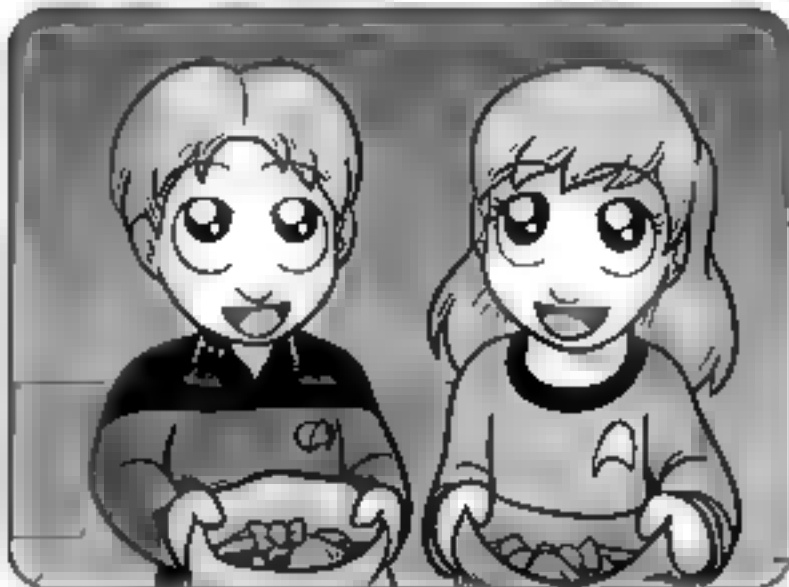
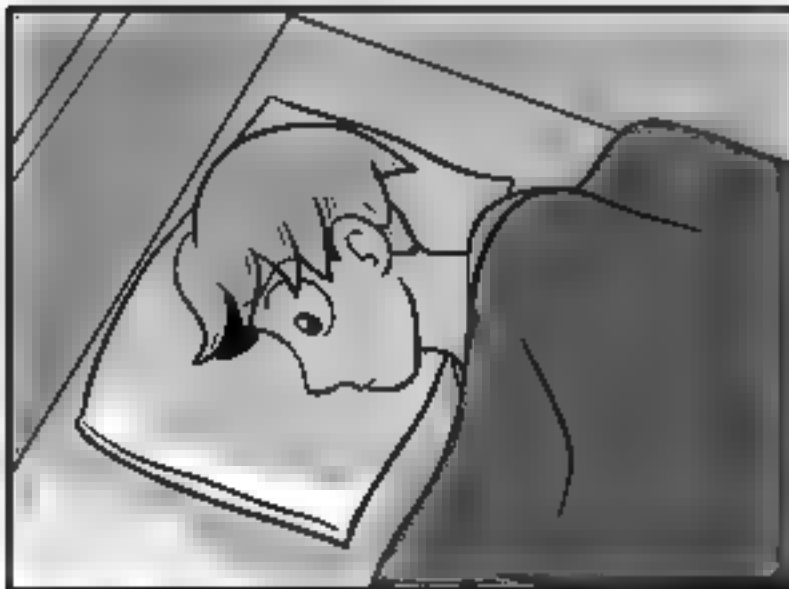
THERE'S NO NEED TO TAKE THAT RISK! HE WILL NO DOUBT NOT TALK TO ME AT SCHOOL AFTER I RAN OFF TODAY BUT I CAN MAKE A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE OF HIM AT HIS WORKPLACE TOMORROW!

HM. VERY WELL ANY ACTION TAKEN WOULD LIKELY BE ON THE WEEKEND ANYWAY JUST MAKE SURE YOU DO IT

OKAY!

MAY I BORROW YOUR CHAIR? IT WOULD MAKE IT EASIER TO GET BACK UP THERE

USE THE DOOR.



WHAT WERE
YOU THINKING?!



I'M SO SORRY I NEEDED TO TALK TO
SOMEONE... S-SHE SAID SHE WOULDN'T

HOW STUPID
ARE YOU?!

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK SAYING
YOU'RE SORRY AGAIN IS GOING TO
MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE?!



JUST LEAVE
ME ALONE!

IT'S GOING TO BE
OKAY YOU'LL SEE! THIS
IS ALL JUST A PHASE!



HMPH.



STOP SECOND GUESSING
YOURSELF! SHE BETRAYED YOU.
SHE'S NUTS. YOU HAVE EVERY
RIGHT TO STAY ANGRY!



ET TU YODA T-SHIRT?



Late Friday afternoon.



Meanwhile and possibly simultaneously

MELISSA, ARE YOU SURE YOU ARE OKAY WAITING OUTSIDE?

OUTSIDE? WHY SHOULD I WAIT OUTSIDE? JUSTIN WOULD BE THRILLED TO SEE ME! WE CAN MAKE DINNER PLANS, AND--

SLAP

NO I SHOULD REALLY STAY OUTSIDE...

YOU SHOULD NOT SLAP YOURSELF!

MYTHBUSTERS PROVED THAT SENSE SLAPPING WORKS.

THEY DID NOT INTEND FOR PEOPLE TO START SLAPPING THEMSELVES!

YOU DON'T KNOW THAT

YOU GOING TO KICK ANYTHING TODAY?

I DOUBT IT IT'S NOT LIKE I KNEW I'D BE KICKING ANYTHING ON TUESDAY

WAIT I MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING.





YOU LOOK FAMILIAR, CREEPY
GUY... HAVE YOU BEEN TO ANY
ANIME CONVENTIONS?

WHAT DOES
THAT MATTER?!

FINDING COMMON
GROUND IS OFTEN THE
FASTEST WAY TO
DEFUSE A SITUATION.

NOW?

NOW?
NOW WHAT?

NOW?

FWSH

NNNOOWW?!









OKAY SO.

IT'S A
DRAGON.

BUT IT'S A
SMALL DRAGON.



WHICH IS STILL
ABOUT AS BIG AS
A SMALL CAR.



GRUMPH

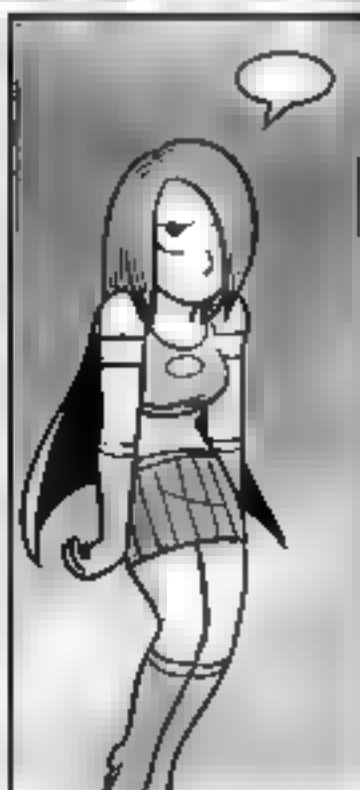
HUH?



HEY!

WSH

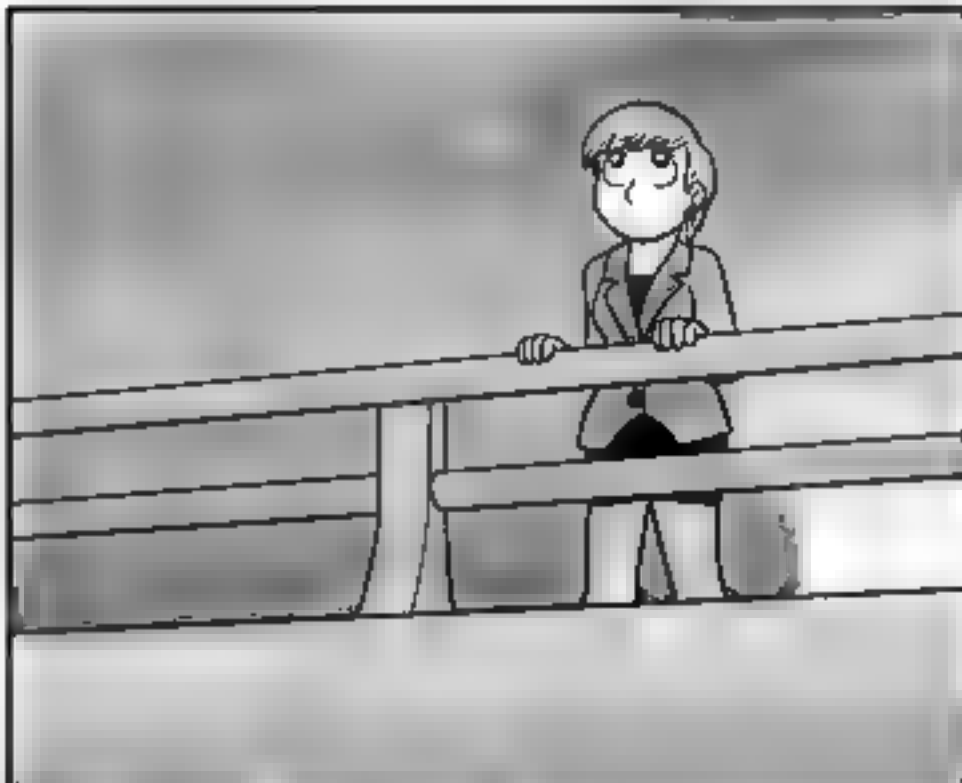
WHAT DO I DO?! DO I
MAKE SURE MY INCREDIBLY
POWERFUL FRIENDS ARE
OKAY OR DO I FOLLOW
THAT DRAGON AND MAKE
SURE IT DOESN'T EAT
DEFENSELESS PEOPLE?!

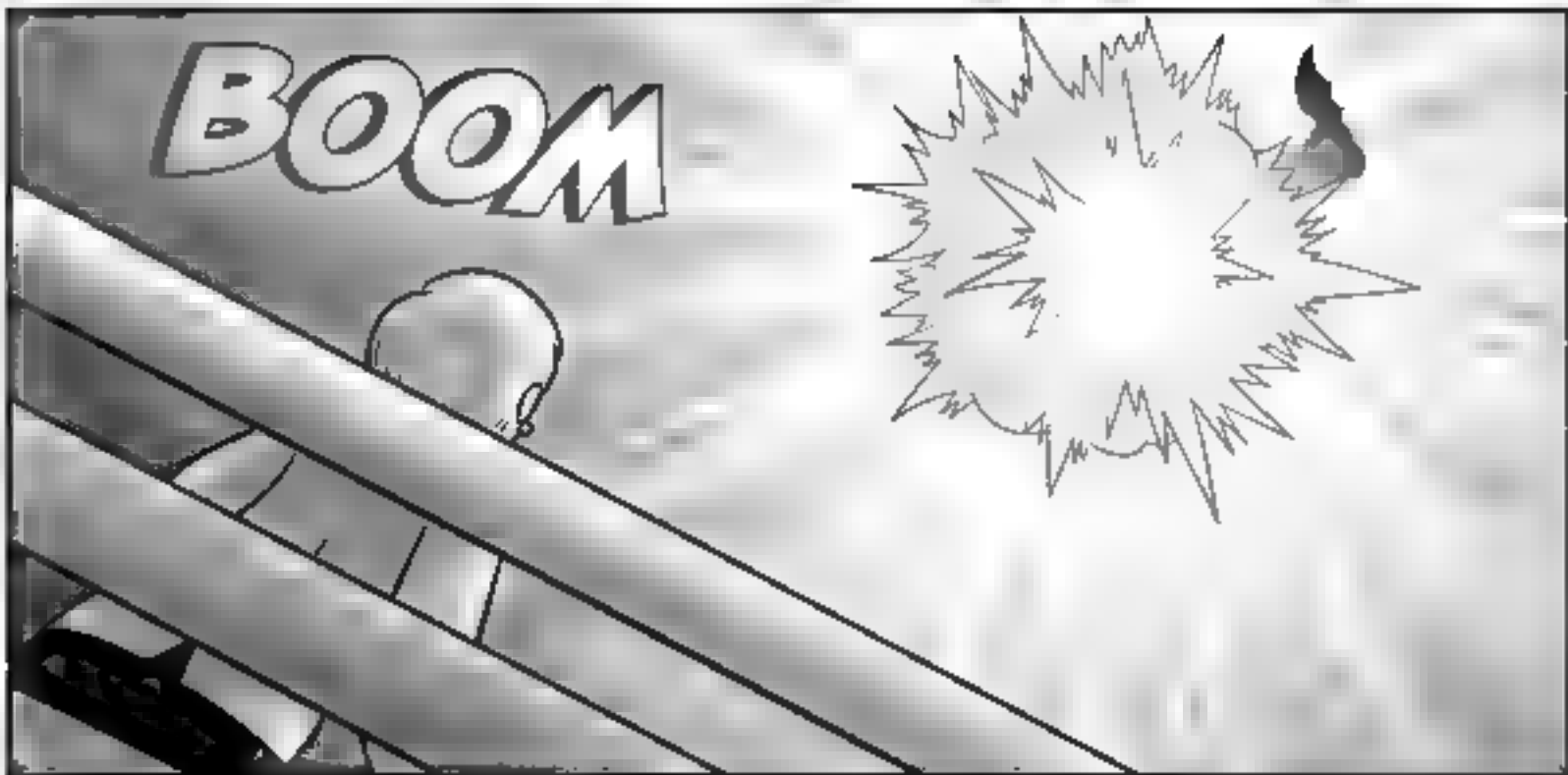
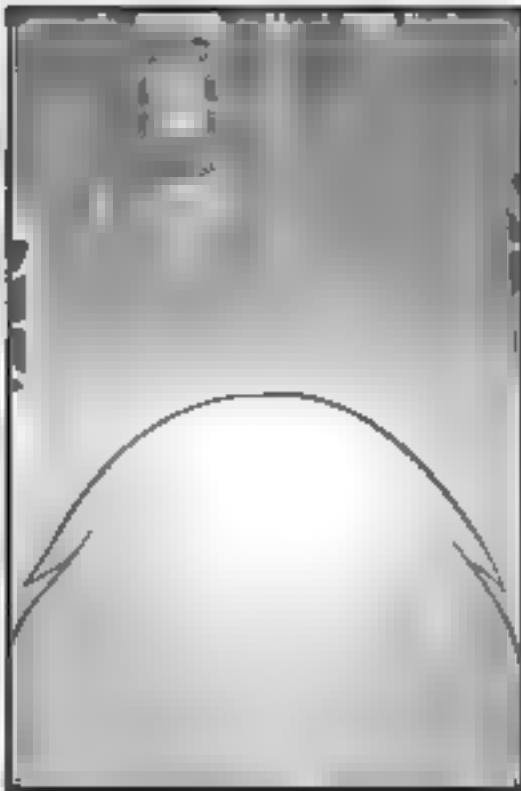


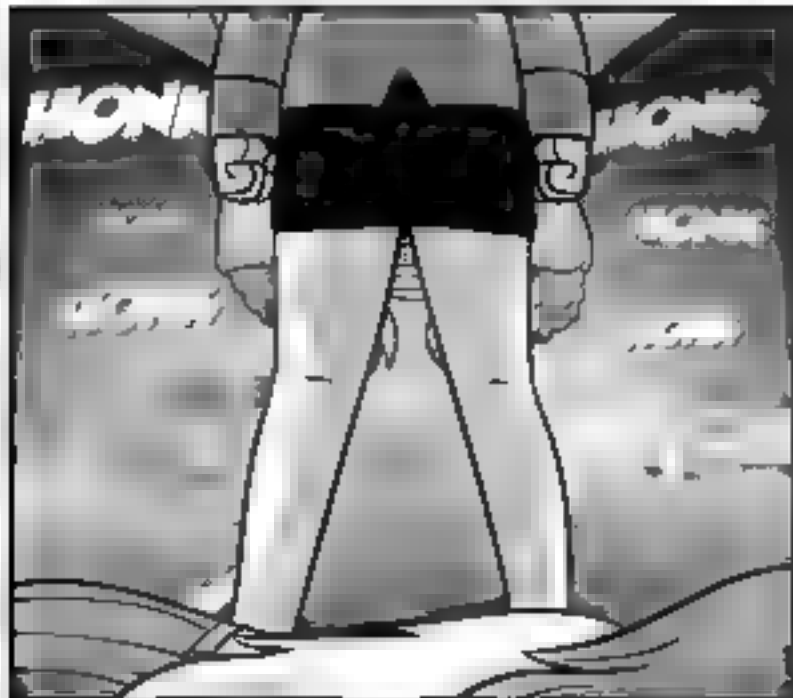
DAMMIT

DAMMIT

DAMMIT!







Moments earlier



WINGS OF THAT SIZE FLAPPING AT THAT RATE COULD NOT POSSIBLY SUPPORT A CREATURE OF YOUR BULK!



"THE FLIGHT OF DRAGONS" RULES DON'T APPLY EH?

DOESN'T MATTER



YOU WERE DEAD THE MOMENT I SCREAMED



THWACK-A-THOOM

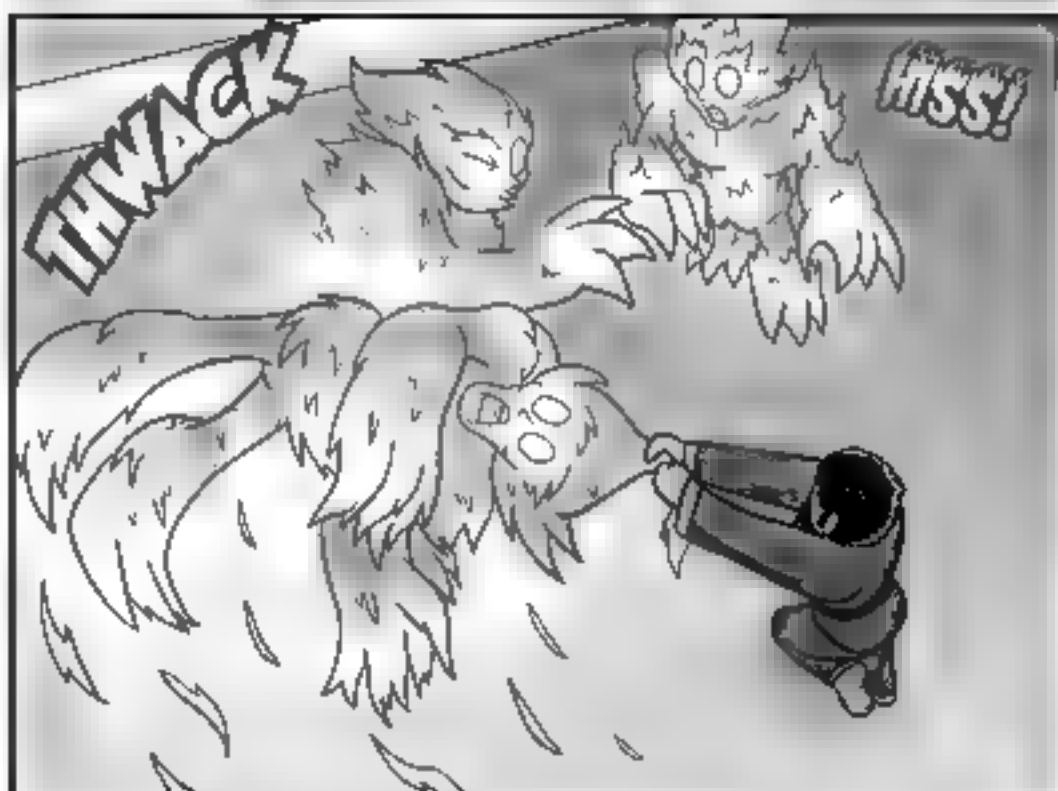


HERE COMES A NEW CHALLENGER, BITCH!











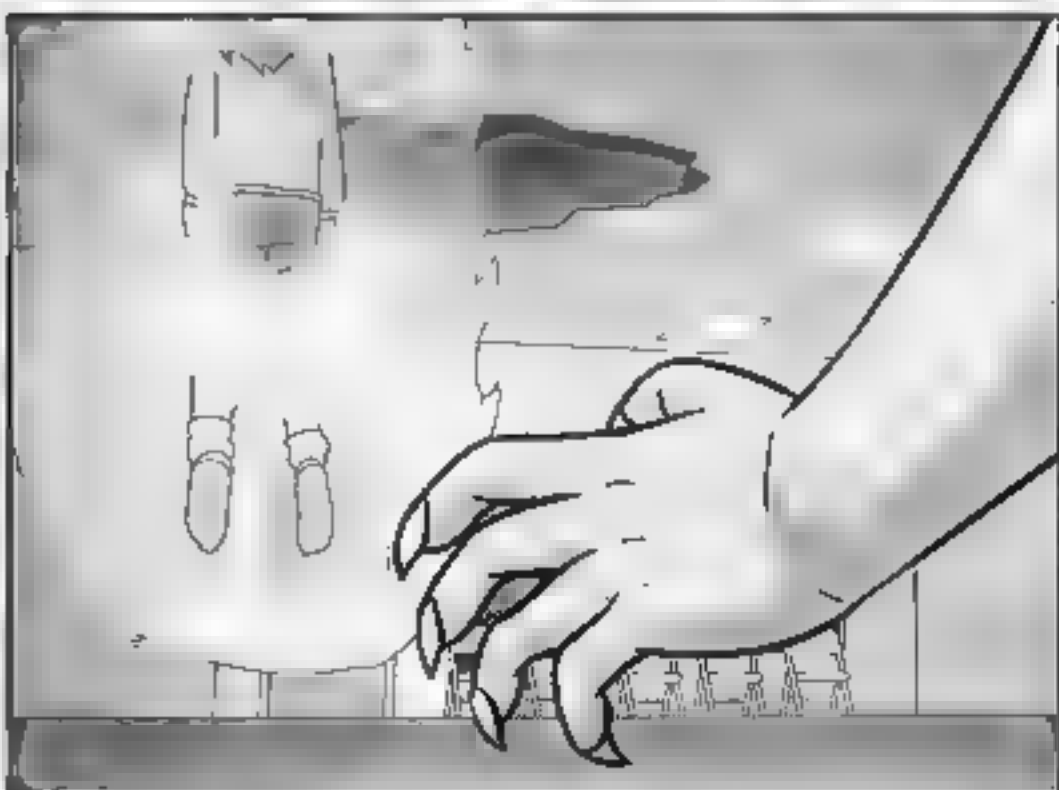
GREG'S GETTING RID OF
FIRE THINGS ALMOST AS
FAST AS THEY'RE BEING
SUMMONED..

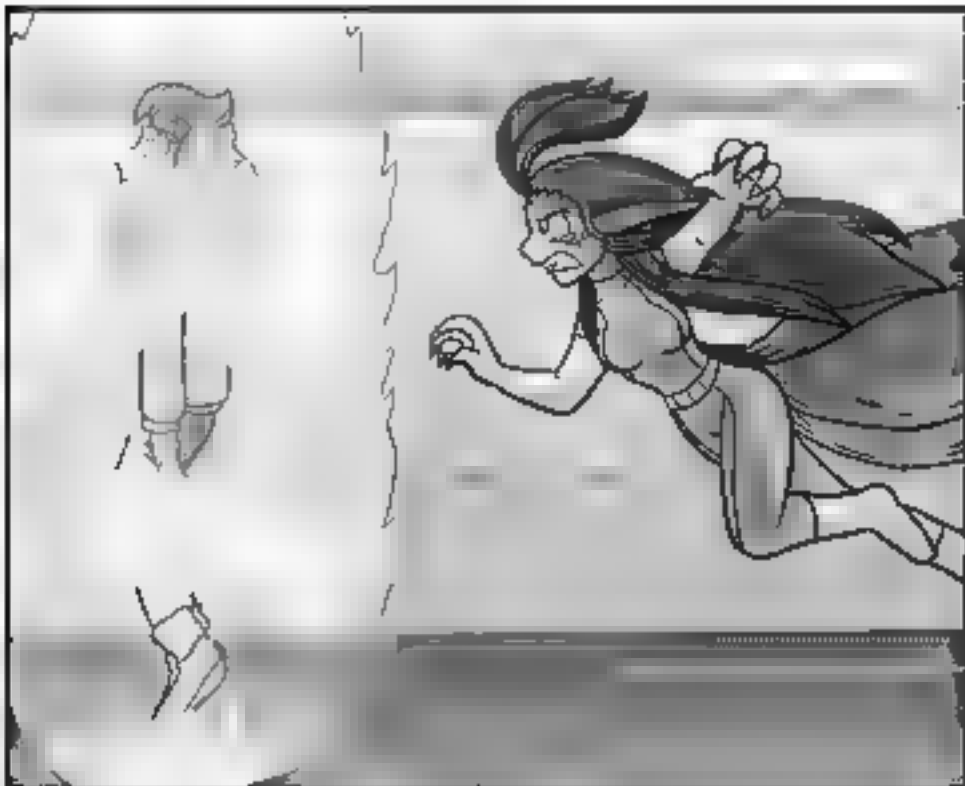


BUT THEY'RE NOT
THE REAL PROBLEM.



ANYTHING HE'S SUMMONED
WILL GO AWAY IF THE GUY'S
UNCONSCIOUS.





I WAS GOING TO TRY TO
KNOCK HIM OUT IF HE'S
UNCONSCIOUS EVERY
THING HE'S SUMMONED
WILL GO AWAY!



I KNOW A SLEEPER HOLD THAT
SHOULD BE ABLE TO KNOCK
HIM OUT WITHOUT HURTING
HIM. BUT I CAN'T GET
THROUGH THE HEAT BARRIER!



THE HEAT WOULDN'T BE
A PROBLEM FOR ME IN
THIS FORM, BUT I DON'T
KNOW HOW TO DO A
SLEEPER HOLD!



PUT YOUR RIGHT SHOULDER
OVER THEIR SHOULDER!

LIKE THIS?



ARTHUR!

YES. MISS CRANIUM?

ARE YOU AWARE THAT THERE IS A DRAGON OR A DEMON OR SOMETHING IN DOWNTOWN MOPERVILLE?!

I AM AWARE

THEN WHY HAVEN'T YOU DISPATCHED AGENTS?!

IT IS TOO PUBLIC. AGENTS USING MAGIC WOULD RAISE QUESTIONS.

YOU ALREADY TOLD THE PUBLIC THAT MAGIC IS REAL! ALSO? IT'S A DRAGON!

WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO DENY THE EXISTENCE OF MAGIC FOR MUCH LONGER ANYWAY THE ACCESSIBILITY OF MAGIC HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE REAL SECRET

BUT--

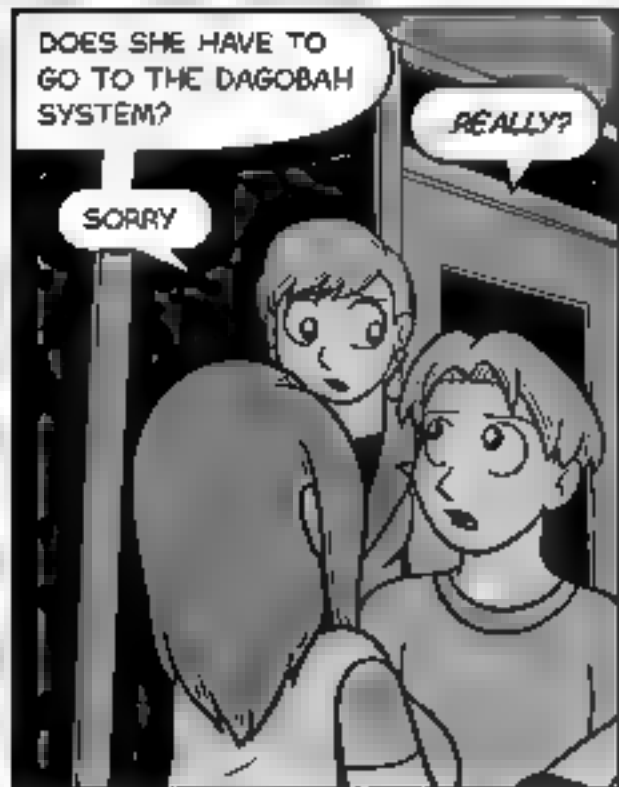
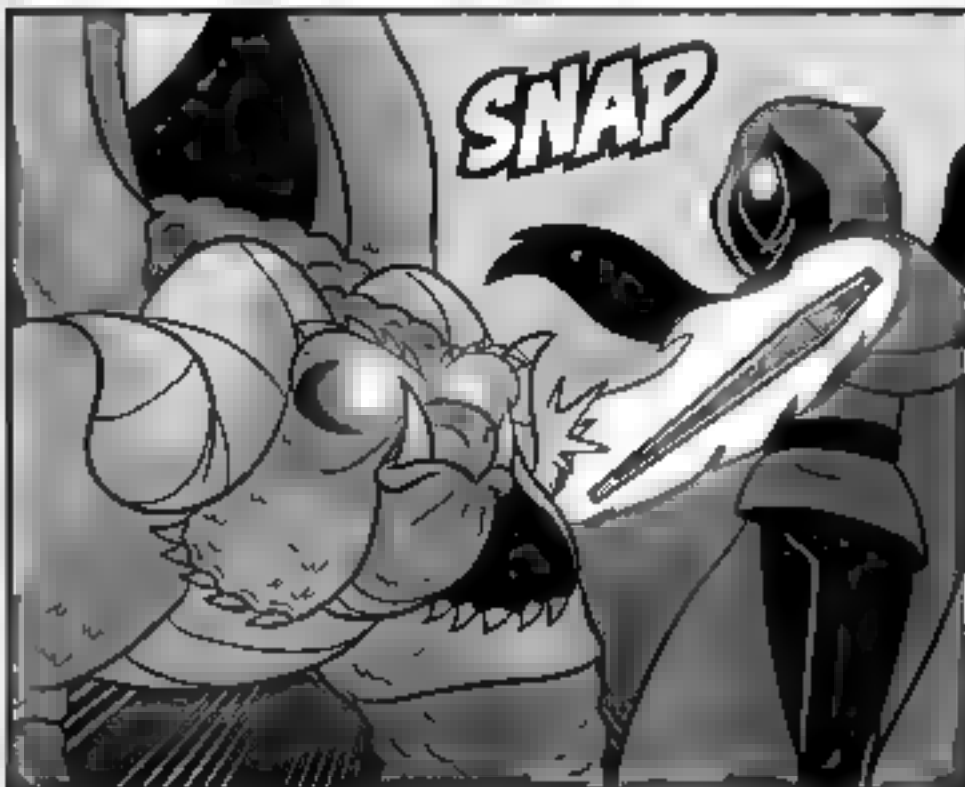
POLICE HAVE GUNS OF THEIR OWN. WITHOUT MAGIC, OUR IMMEDIATE PRESENCE IS REDUNDANT

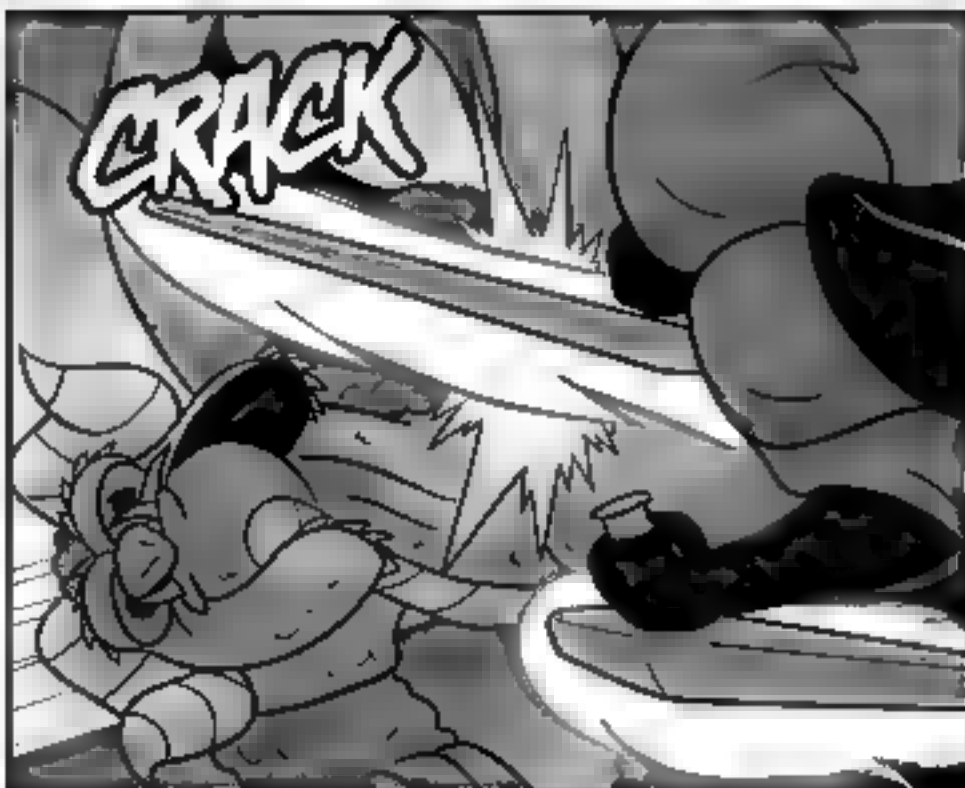
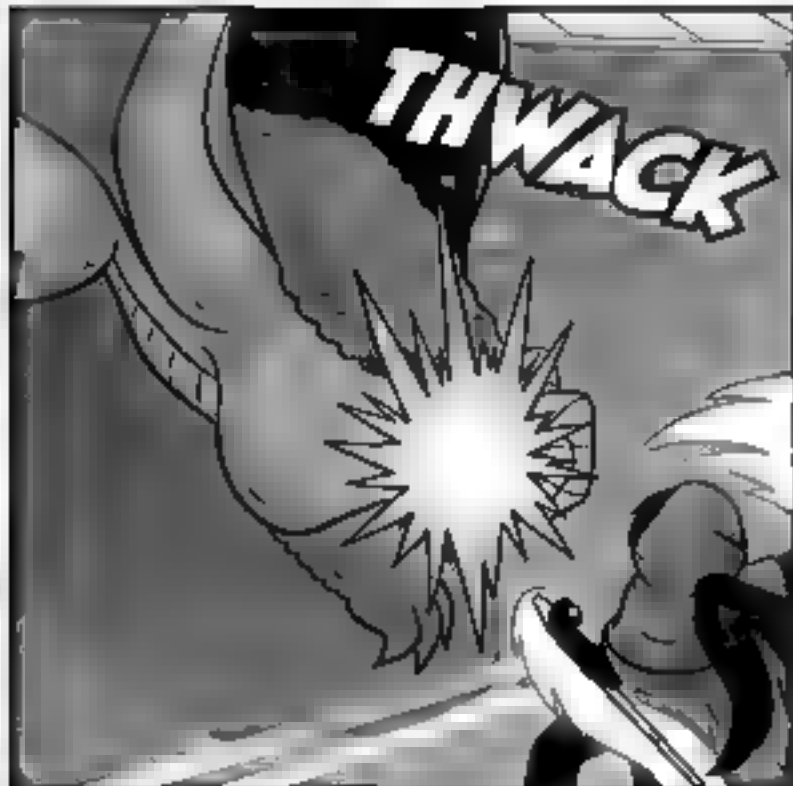
BUT WE COULD--

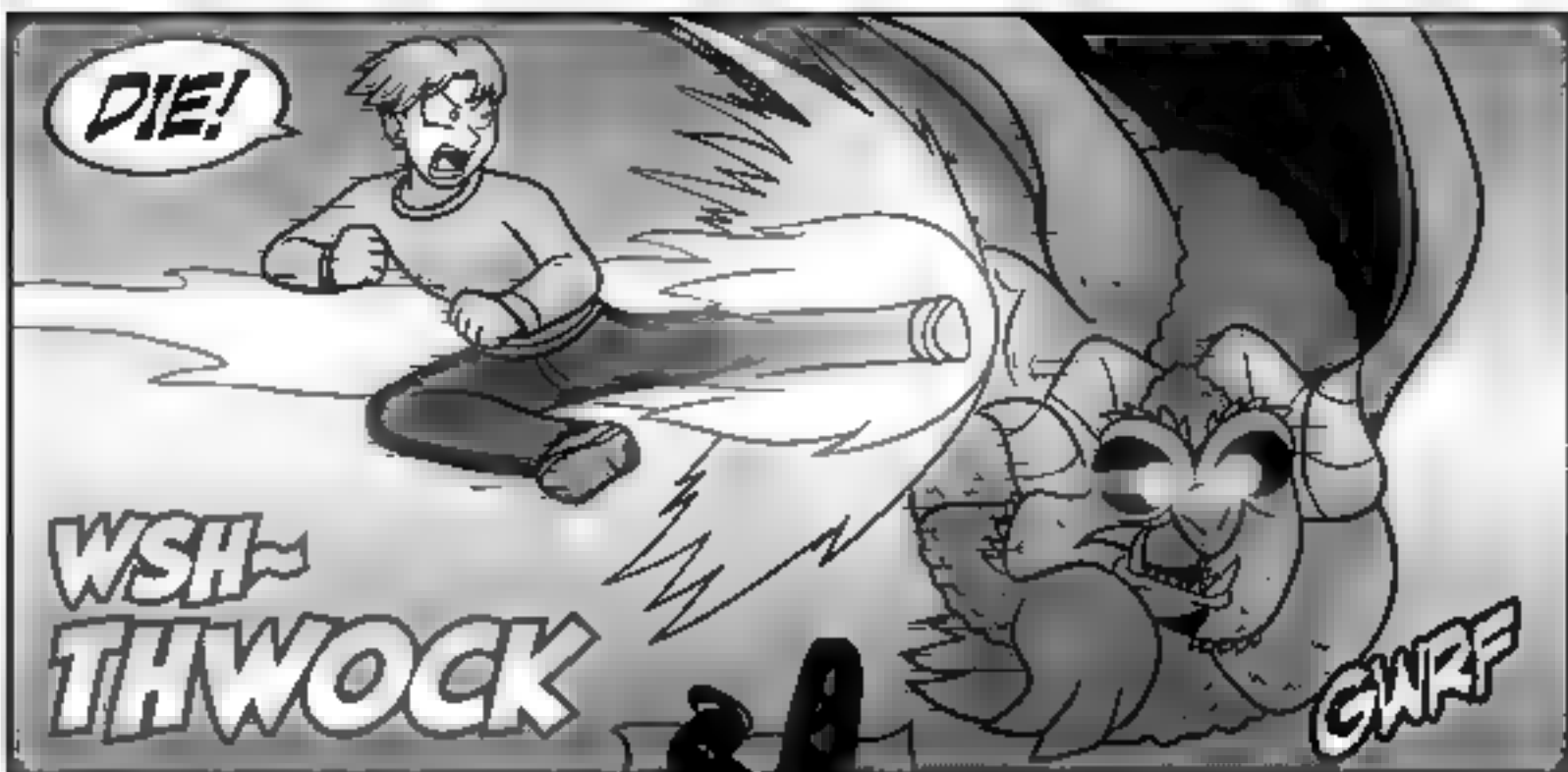
NO.

DO NOT WORRY, MISS CRANIUM.

THE OCCASIONAL CASUALTY WILL NOT DISRUPT OUR LONG TERM OBJECTIVES.









OKAY THEN.

LET'S FIGHT!

HUH.

OH, GOOD.

HAVING TO GO BACK WOULD
HAVE BEEN EMBARRASSING.

I THINK YOU'VE GOT IT! JUST
BE SURE NOT TO PRESS AGAINST
THE LARYNX! WE DON'T WANT
TO CHOKe THIS GUY!

OKAY!

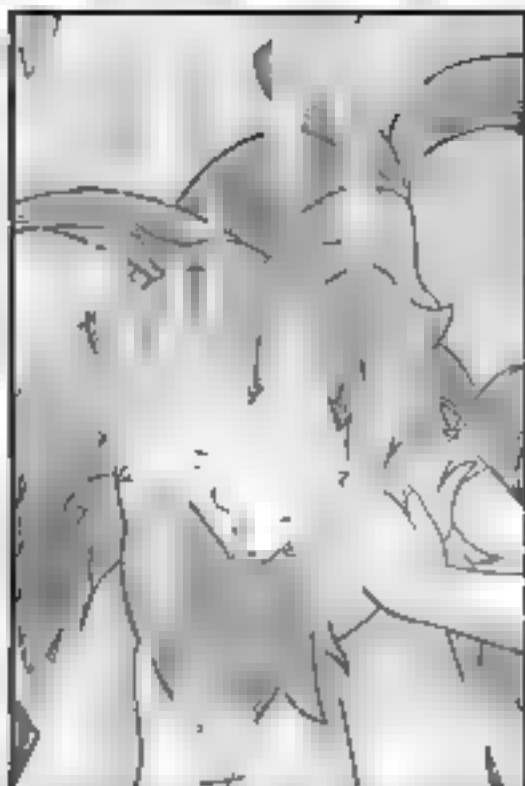
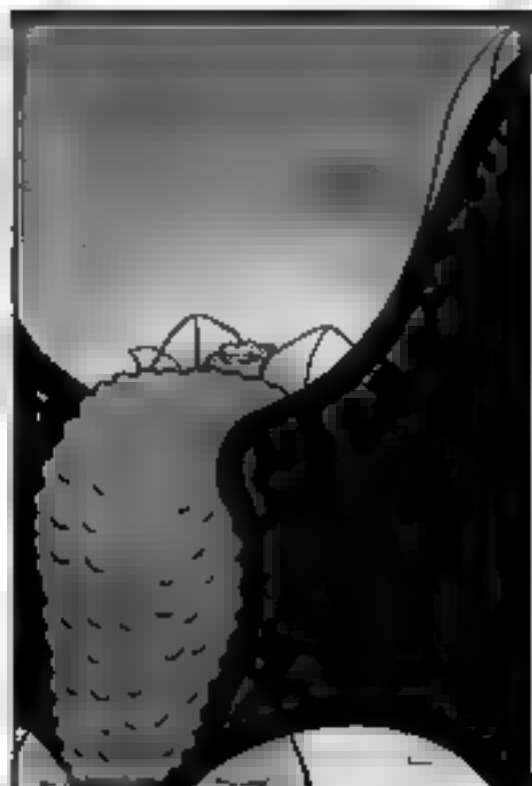
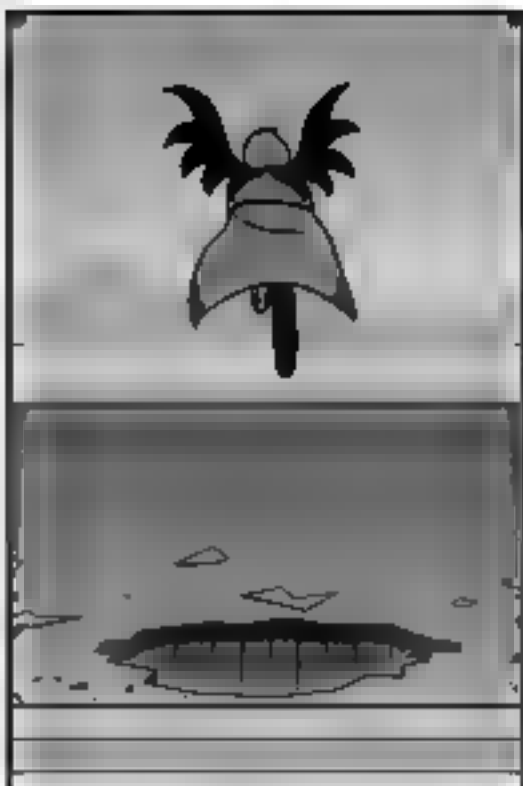
OF COURSE NOW
WE HAVE TO GET
YOU TO HIM.

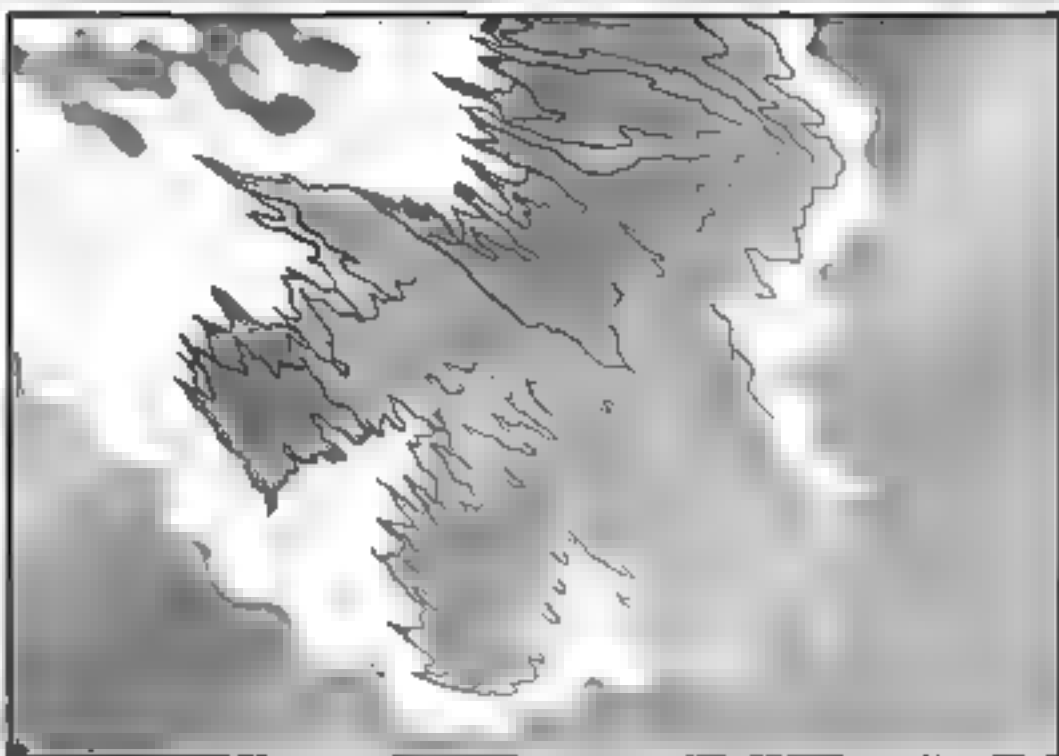
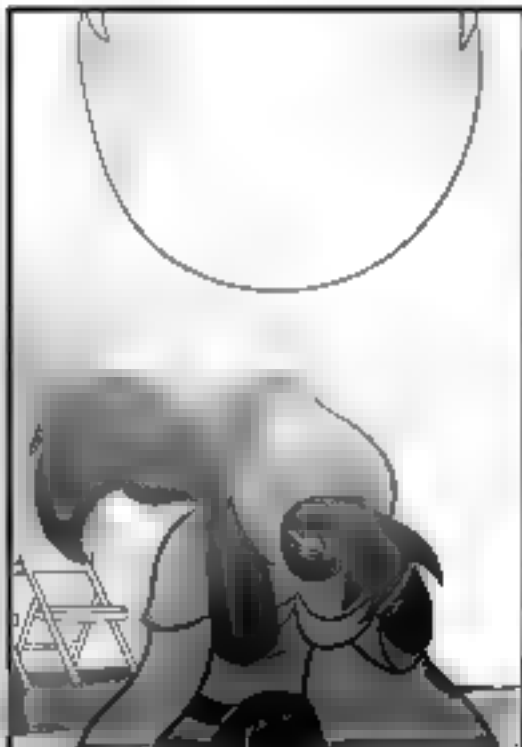
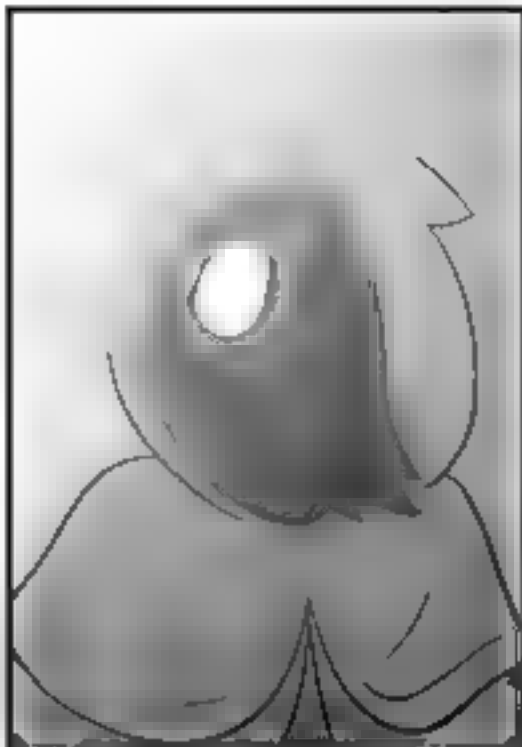
I SHOULD
DO WHAT?

WON'T THAT
KILL ME TOO?

YES. OF COURSE.

THE GREATER
GOOD











LOOK. I'M SURE I'M FINE. I NEED TO GET BACK TO THE DOJO!



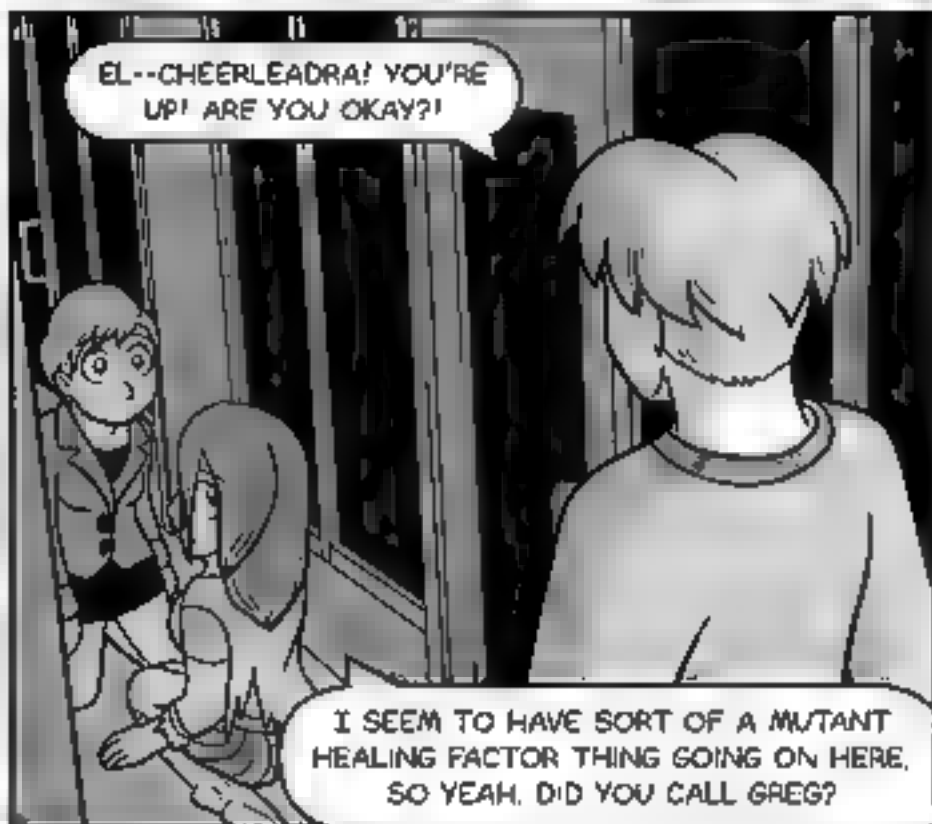
IF YOU WERE IN ANY SHAPE TO FIGHT THAT THING YOU WOULD'VE FLOWN OFF WITH OR WITHOUT MY PERMISSION. BESIDES, ANOTHER HERO'S ON IT

SO YOU'VE SAID BUT WHO IS HE?



I DON'T KNOW BUT HE'S A GOOD GUY WHO KICKS ASS. YOU AREN'T SHOWING SIGNS OF A CONCUSSION. AND YOUR SCRAPES ARE FADING. SUPER HEALING?

MAYBE? I CAME WITH A CONFUSING USER MANUAL



EL--CHEERLEADRA! YOU'RE UP! ARE YOU OKAY?!

I SEEM TO HAVE SORT OF A MUTANT HEALING FACTOR THING GOING ON HERE. SO YEAH. DID YOU CALL GREG?



HE CALLED ME! IS CALLING ME THEY KNOCKED OUT THE SUMMONER! HANG ON.



SHE'S OKAY!



WHY YES. I IMAGINE ME YELLING INTO THE PHONE WOULD HURT YOUR EARS.

OKAY CHEERLEADER'S OKAY AND JUSTIN SAID THIS SHADOW GUY MAY WELL HAVE SAVED HER LIFE SO HE'S COOL.

GOOD. I AM FOND OF MY FACE.

WHATEVER THE POWER SOURCE WAS, I BELIEVE IT WAS CHANNELLED THROUGH THIS PENDANT, BUT THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE UNDER HIS SHIRT...

MORE JEWELRY?

NO.

THE BEST THEY COULD DO WAS GIVE ME ACCESS TO ONE SPELL THAT FIT MY INNATE TALENTS. THEY HAD TO LEAVE A MARK...

A BIRTH MARK?

A MAGIC MARK, PROBABLY RECENT. I SUSPECT IT IS WHY HE CAN SUMMON THINGS.

INNATE TALENTS ARE RARE. IT IS MORE LIKELY SOMETHING HE HAS YEARNED FOR IF I HAD TO GUESS...

...HE IS LONELY.

SUMMONING IS HIS INNATE TALENT?

WOW HE MUST BE REALLY LONELY IF THE VOICE IN HIS HEAD COULD MAKE THE END OF THE WORLD SOUND LIKE A GOOD IDEA.

END OF THE WORLD?

HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT CAUSING AN APOCALYPSE THOUGH I'M NOT SURE HOW HE COULD END THE WORLD WITH FIRE THINGS AND A DRAGON.

NOR AM I, BUT WHILE THERE ARE APOCALYPSES IN THEOLOGY RELATED TO THE END OF THE WORLD, THE WORD ITSELF IS ABOUT REVEALING THINGS...

..OH.

WHAT WAS SEEN.

..IS WHAT WAS.

JHN

HE'S WAKING UP!

...IS HE STILL POSSESSED?



A FURRY



A BLACK MAGE



AND HAVEN'T I SEEN YOU
COSPLAYING AS CHUN-LI?

YEP!



WHERE AM I? THE LAST
I CAN REMEMBER, I WAS AT
HOME COMBING MY BEARD.

YOU ARE AT THE ANIME MARTIAL
ARTS DOJO. WHAT IS YOUR NAME?



I'M DEX

Hi DEX THE BIG GUY'S
GREG. AND YOU CAN
CALL ME SHADE TAIL

THWUMP



ARE YOU
OKAY?

I'M FINE!
I TRIPPED.

BUT
YOU WERE
SITTING.



YES, I WAS. SORRY, MISTRESS.
MA'AM. SHADE TAIL. I HAVE NO
NAME. I AM MYSTERIOUS.

COOL

WHERE DID YOU
GET THIS
PENDANT, DEX?

I WAS STILL
WEARING
THAT?

YOU FORGOT IT WAS
UNDER THERE?

MY MEMORY'S FUZZY
ABOUT THAT THING. IT
WAS IN MY APARTMENT
BUT I DON'T REMEMBER
WHERE IT CAME FROM.

IT LOOKED COOL
SO I PUT IT ON. I
VAGUELY REMEMBER
STARTING TO TAKE IT
OFF A FEW TIMES.

SOMEONE WAS USING THIS TO
CHANNEL MAGIC POWER INTO
YOU. THEY MUST HAVE PUMPED
YOU FULL OF POWER EVERY
TIME YOU TRIED TO REMOVE IT.

NEAT

DIFFERENT PEOPLE RESPOND
DIFFERENTLY TO HAVING MAGIC
POWER CHanneled INTO THEM.

I THINK IT MADE YOU DISORIENTED AND
OPEN TO THE SUGGESTIONS OF WHOEVER WAS
ABLE TO GET THROUGH THAT DISORIENTATION
AND COMMUNICATE WITH YOU.

IT WOULD ALSO EXPLAIN THE
SELECTIVE AMNESIA, AND HOW THEY KEPT
YOU FROM TAKING THE PENDANT OFF.

NOT THAT I'M ACCUSING YOU OF ANYTHING,
MISTER MYSTERIOUS MAGIC MASTER. BUT IS
THERE ANY PARTICULAR REASON YOU KNOW
ABOUT THIS SPECIFIC SORT OF THING? HOW
OFTEN COULD THIS POSSIBLY COME UP?

...THERE WAS A
TIME WHEN I WAS
INTERESTED IN
QUICKLY GAINING
POWER.

IF SOMETHING IS A FOOLISH
SHORTCUT TO POWER, I HAVE
BEEN TALKED OUT OF IT.

How To
Sell Your
Soul For
Power

DEX, YOU WERE THE ONE WHO SUMMONED THE MONSTER ON TUESDAY, AND YOU SUMMONED MORE OF THEM TODAY.

AWES. NO WAIT I LIKE JUSTIN AND THE COMIC SHOP NOT AWE SOME

INDEED, SO BE HONEST WITH ME, BECAUSE WHOEVER PUT THAT MARK ON YOUR CHEST IS LIKELY THE ONE WHO MADE YOU DO IT WHO WAS IT?

I DON'T KNOW I JUST NOTICED IT WAS THERE LAST FRIDAY

WHAT? YOU DIDN'T EVEN... NO. NO, THAT CANNOT BE TRUE.

WHY NOT?

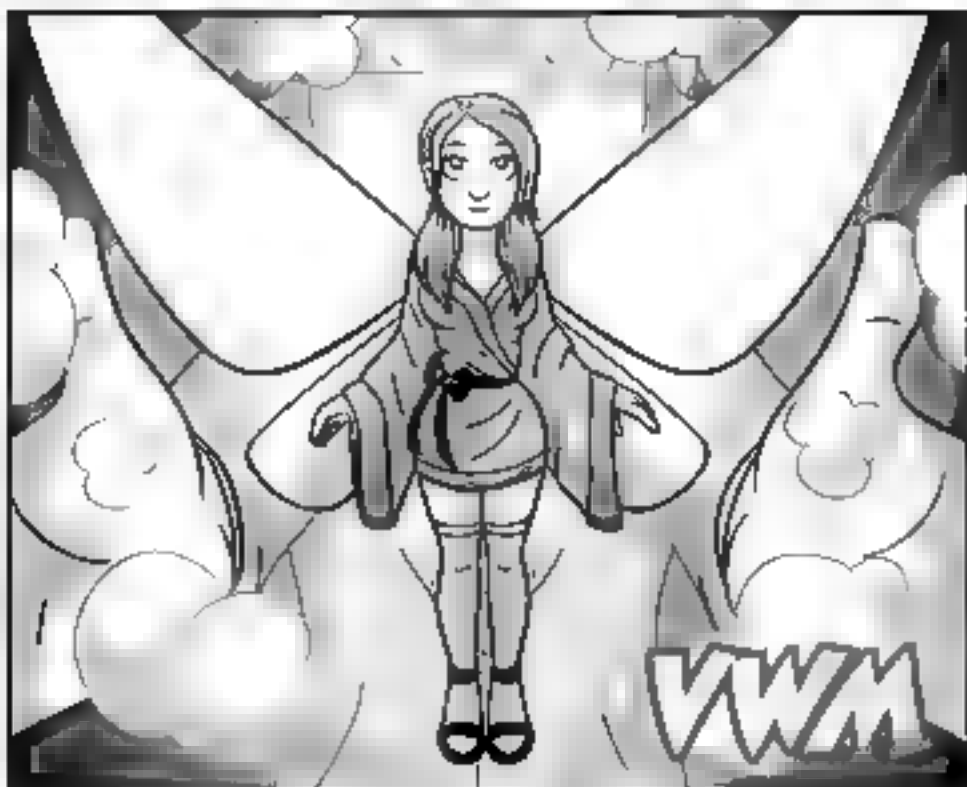
BECAUSE THE IDEA OF SOMEONE GIVING PEOPLE THOSE MARKS WITHOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE OR CONSENT IS TERRIFYING AND I WOULD RATHER IT NOT BE TRUE.

DID YOU KNOW YOU COULD SUMMON FIRE MONSTERS?

I DIDN'T THINK I COULD SUMMON ANYTHING LIKE THAT

"LIKE THAT?" IS THERE SOMETHING YOU KNOW YOU CAN SUMMON?

YES



WELL, SHE'S SIGNIFICANTLY SMALLER
AND CUTER THAN A FIRE THING.



IT'S ACTUALLY THE SAME SPELL. WITHOUT
CHANNELED POWER, HOWEVER, I DOUBT HE CAN
SUMMON ANYTHING BIGGER THAN THAT.

I WAS PLAYING VIDEO GAMES
ON SATURDAY WHEN I SOME-
HOW MADE HER APPEAR.



I KNOW SHE'S
NOT REAL. SHE'S
LIKE SOME WEIRD
MAGIC. SEMI-
AUTONOMOUS
PUPPET THING



BUT I LIKE HER



YOU'RE NOT GOING
TO TAKE HER AWAY
ARE YOU?



THAT MARK IS WHAT ALLOWS
YOU TO SUMMON HER AND I
CANNOT GET RID OF IT, SO
NO. JUST KEEP THE ABILITY
A SECRET AND TRY NOT TO
DO ANYTHING TOO CREEPY
WITH IT



AWESOME



A bit earlier, shortly after Greg's phone call

I STILL NEED TO GET BACK TO THE DOJO. BUT I DON'T THINK I SHOULD FLY YET

I CAN GIVE YOU A RIDE JUSTIN REALLY NEEDS TO GET BACK TO WATCHING THE SHOP

I HOPE EVERYBODY IN THERE STILL THINKS OUR FAKE SECURITY CAMERAS ARE REAL

ONE PROBLEM THOUGH. MY CAR'S AT THE PARKING GARAGE I CAN LEND YOU MY JACKET BUT I'M SURE YOU'D STILL GET RECOGNIZED.

UH TWO PROBLEMS. CAROL THE NEWS REPORTER'S BACK. AND THERE'S A CROWD FORMING

IT'S OKAY I HAVE A... POWER THAT LETS ME TRANSFORM INTO A SECRET IDENTITY

YOU'D BETTER DO THAT QUICKLY BEFORE SOMEONE THINKS TO LOOK BACK HERE.

OKAY TIME TO BECOME MILD--
WAIT DO I WANT MELISSA KNOWING ABOUT THAT ONE? THAT'S GOTTA BE MY BEST IDENTITY FOR NOT DRAWING ATTENTION TO MYSELF

THE GOTH ONE'S OUTFIT WOULD PROBABLY STICK OUT TOO MUCH. DO THEY ALWAYS USE THE SAME OUTFITS? I SHOULDN'T GAMBLE IT BUT THAT LEAVES.

DAMMIT

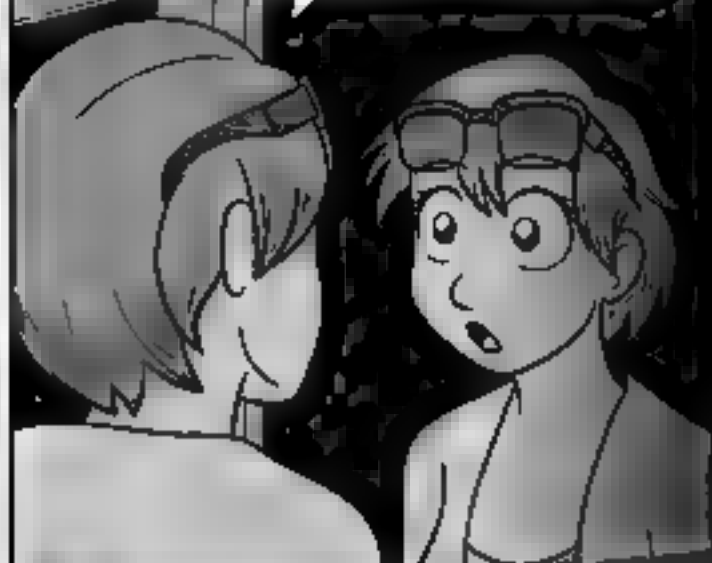
IT'S PARTY TIME.

HURRY!

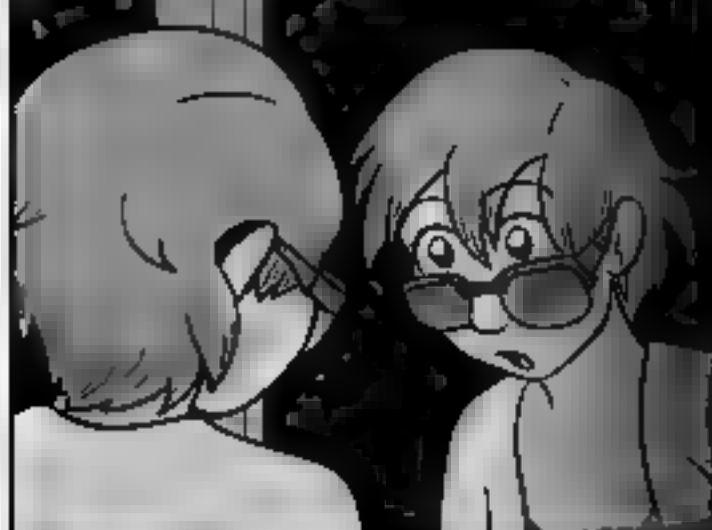
HOLY CRAP I FEEL LIKE I JUST
CHUGGED DOWN AN ESPRESSO
NOT LITERALLY OF COURSE
THAT WOULD HURT UNLESS IT



WAS COLD WHICH WOULDN'T
TASTE AS GOOD WOW I LOOK
DIFFERENT THAN I THOUGHT I
WOULD BUT I GUESS IT SORT



OF MAKES SENSE I LOOK WHAT'S
THE WORD I THINK IT'S SPUNKY BUT
I'M NOT SURE THAT MAKES ME
THINK OF SPUNKY BREWSTER BUT I



PERSONALITY
SHIFT?

UM, YEAH.



DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT SPUNKY BREW-
STER IS OR WAS IT PUNKY BREWSTER I'VE

SO WHICH IS
THE REAL

NOT THIS ONE



ONLY HEARD OF IT BEFORE WAS THAT A TV
SHOW OR SOMETHING WOW I'M FULL OF ENERGY

ALRIGHT CHEER. LET'S GO TO MY CAR WE CAN TAKE THE LONG WAY AROUND TO AVOID THE PRESS.

RIGHT!

BYE JUSTIN!

MELISSA!

YES?

WE SHOULD TALK SOMETIME.

WE... WE SHOULD?

YES.

I.. I'M NOT SURE WHAT TO SAY

HEY, CAROL!

OH HELL.

OH MY GOD IT IS AWESOME TO SEE YOU! YOU ARE THE REPORTER WHO PROVES THAT SEXY AND SMART GO TOGETHER LIKE NOTHING ELSE! SERIOUSLY!



THANK YOU! THAT'S TOTALLY WHAT I'M GOING FOR!

YOU ARE WELCOME



HOWEVER, WE'RE CURRENTLY FOCUSED ON THE SUPPOSED DRAGON THAT WAS HERE EARLIER. DID YOU SEE ANYTHING?

DID I?! CHEERLEADRA WAS FLYING THROUGH THE SKY CHASING THAT DRAGON WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN. BAM! IT SHOT THIS EXPLOSIVE FIREBALL INTO TRAFFIC!



BUT CHEERLEADRA WAS ALL LIKE "HELL NO" AND GOT IN FRONT OF THE BLAST, WHICH SAVED EVERYBODY DRIVING BELOW, BUT KNOCKED HER OUT COLD!



BUT THEN THAT SHADOW CLOAK GUY SHOWED UP AND FOUGHT OFF THE DRAGON LONG ENOUGH FOR OTHER COOL PEOPLE TO MOVE CHEERLEADRA TO SAFETY!



AND DID YOU SEE WHAT HAPPENED TO CHEERLEADRA AFTER THAT?

NO, BUT I'VE GOT THIS CRAZY FEELING THAT SHE'S GOING TO BE OKAY!



AND WHAT IS THIS CRAZY FEELING BASED ON?

OH. AH... YOU KNOW! SHE'S A SUPER HERO! AND STUFF THEY ALWAYS BOUNCE BACK! THEY'RE BOUNCY



AND WHAT
OF THE
CLOAKED
FIGURE?

I'M SURE SHE
WAS BOUNCY
TOO OR WAS
THAT A GUY?

I WAS ACTUALLY
WONDERING IF YOU
GOT A GOOD LOOK
AT THEM.

IT'S BEING REPORTED THAT ALL VIDEO
RECORDINGS OF THE FIGHT BECAME
GLITCHY THE MOMENT THE CLOAKED
FIGURED BOUNCED- ER. JUMPED IN.



WE EVEN HAD TROUBLE WITH OUR CAMERA
WHEN WE FIRST ARRIVED WE ONLY JUST GOT
IT WORKING BEFORE YOU SHOWED UP

HEIDI! WE
HAVE TO GO!

HUH? OH
UH RIGHT!



WOW THAT IS **HARDCORE**
IDENTITY PROTECTION



SORRY CAROL!
GOTTA RUN!

"HEIDI?"

IT WAS THE CLOSEST GIRL'S NAME
TO "HYDE" I COULD THINK OF



HEY SHADE TAIL! YOUR UH R.I.D.E.'S
ON HER WAY HERE WITH SOMEONE
NAMED MELISSA.

I HONESTLY HAVE NO IDEA.

ISN'T THAT
JUSTIN'S EX-
GIRLFRIEND?

I GUESS I'D BETTER FIND MY
JACKET AND HAIR BAND. WHERE
THE HECK DID THOSE GO?

I WILL ASSIST
IN YOUR SEARCH.

DO YOU NEED A RIDE HOME?

I THINK YOU'LL BE FINE SO
LONG AS YOU STOP WEARING
THAT PENDANT AND I DON'T
THINK THAT CLOAKED GUY
WAS PLANNING ON GIVING IT
BACK ANYWAY.

IT'D PROBABLY BE A GOOD IDEA
TO STAY IN TOUCH, THOUGH.
JUST TO BE SAFE MAYBE
HANG OUT ONCE IN A WHILE.

HE CAN
HAVE IT

REALLY?

MAYBE I DON'T KNOW IF
I DROVE HERE AM I GOING
TO BE OKAY NOW?

SURE! YOU
LIKE ANIME
RIGHT?

YEAH BUT IT'S HARD TO
BE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT
IT EVER SINCE THEY CAN-
CELED THE LUCKY BUNNY
BOUNTY SHOW

DEX, YOU AND I ARE GONNA
GET ALONG JUST FINE

..NASTY FIRE THINGS MUST
HAVE KICKED THEM OVER
HERE THANK GOODNESS
THEY WEREN'T REALLY FIRE

I SHOULD
LEAVE BEFORE
OTHERS ARRIVE

WOULD IT BE ALRIGHT IF I HELD ONTO
THAT PENDANT? I KNOW SOMEONE WHO
MIGHT BE ABLE TO USE THAT TO FIGURE
OUT WHO WAS BEHIND ALL THIS.

THAT MAY BE, BUT I



..YES?

....JUST MAKE CERTAIN
NO ONE WEARS IT.



DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO THAT WAS?

NO BUT HE DOESN'T KNOW WHO I AM. EITHER



DEX AND I ARE GOING TO TRY AND FIND OUT IF HE DROVE HERE YOU SHOULD STAY AND WAIT FOR YOUR RIDE. SHE'LL BE WEARING SUNGLASSES.

OKAY!

A little bit later



THE DOJO'S IN THIS SHOPPING CENTER?

YEAH IT'S HARD TO SPOT FROM THE ROAD YOU CAN JUST LET ME OFF HERE ACTUALLY



I'M STILL A BIT HAZY ON WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED AFTER I GOT KNOCKED OUT BUT I KNOW YOU WERE A BIG HELP THANK YOU

YOU'RE WELCOME. ALL I ASK IN RETURN IS THAT YOU DON'T KISS ME GOODBYE.



KISS YOU?

LIKE YOU KISSED THE REPORTER?

WHAT? I DIDN'T KISS CAROL! I JUST SAID GOODBYE AND GAVE HER A FRIENDLY -



OH CRAP



WHILE WE CANNOT SAY WITH CERTAINTY THAT IT WAS A DRAGON OR THAT "MAGIC" WAS TO BLAME THERE WAS A WINGED REPTILIAN MONSTER IN DOWNTOWN MOPERVILLE.



BASICALLY WE'RE NOT RULING IT OUT

..WE HAVE RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM SOMEONE CLAIMING TO BE THE CLOAKED FIGURE THAT THE SUMMONER HAS BEEN STOPPED WE BELIEVE IT TO BE AUTHENTIC



AND WHY IS THAT?

THE MESSAGE STARTED AS A BLANK NOTE DROPPED BY A FLYING FIGURE THAT NOTE THEN ERUPTED WITH TEXT IN A SWIRL OF FANTASTIC SAPPHIRE LIGHT



OOH!

CLASSY

...I'M NOT SAYING IT COULDN'T BE ALIENS. I'M JUST SAYING WE DON'T HAVE MUCH INFORMATION YET AND THE POSSIBILITIES ARE EFFECTIVELY INFINITE



WHY MUST YOU BE SO CLOSED MINDED?



REGARDLESS OF WHAT THE TRUTH TURNS OUT TO BE. ONE THING IS CERTAIN:



THERE ARE THINGS IN THIS WORLD BEYOND OUR UNDERSTANDING...

AND WE ARE NOT READY FOR THEM.

WOW



YEAH.

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU KISSED CAROL



I KNOW!



SO I GUESS YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT THE PARTY FORM ALWAYS BEING A **WILD FORM**.

I WOULDN'T SAY THAT.

YOU WOULDN'T?



BEING IN THAT FORM WAS FUN! I WAS ENERGETIC AND IMPULSIVE AND I KNEW WHAT TO SAY TO PEOPLE



AND YOU KISSED SARAH'S SISTER BARELY, BUT STILL.

I KNOW BUT THAT QUIRK WAS THE ONLY PART ABOUT IT THAT WAS REALLY BAD AND I SHOULD BE ABLE TO RESIST THAT URGE NOW THAT I'M AWARE OF IT



OKAY SO IT MADE YOU LESS OF A STICK IN THE MUD BUT YOU JUST NEED TO BE A BIT MORE IMPULSIVE AND OUTGOING! YOU HAVE IT IN YOU TO DO THAT *WITHOUT* MAGIC AND TURNING INTO A GIRL.



HELL, I'M EVIDENCE OF THAT! JUST CONSIDER ME "EXHIBIT A"



EXHIBIT D'S.

Late the next morning

I CAN'T BELIEVE
I MISSED A
DRAGON FIGHT

I CAN'T FIGURE
OUT IF YOU WERE
RIGHT OR NOT

LOOK AT THAT
THING. IT
WOULD'VE BEEN
AWESOME TO
SEE IN PERSON.

MAYBE THERE ARE SOME
THINGS PEOPLE SHOULD
KNOW MAYBE T'S
BETTER IF ONLY A FEW
KNOW I DON'T KNOW

WHAT'RE YOU MUMBLING ABOUT?

THAT DOES SUPPORT MY AWESOMENESS.
BUT I'M BETTING YOU WOULDN'T BE
CONFUSED IF IT WAS THAT SIMPLE

PEOPLE WHO WERE HERE YESTERDAY KNEW
STUFF ABOUT MAGIC AND SUMMONED
MONSTERS. IF THEY HADN'T BEEN IN ON THOSE
SECRETS, CHEERLEADRA WOULD HAVE DIED.

IT'S... COMPLICATED YEAH. WHAT'S WITH
YOU? YOU WERE ONE SIDED ON THIS BEFORE
YOU LEARNED ELLIOT WASN'T MY BOYFRIEND

OH, UH..
THAT WAS.

DID MY HAVING A BOY
FRIEND JUST MAKE YOU SO
UNCOMFORTABLE THAT YOU
GOT EXTRA DEFENSIVE
ABOUT EVERYTHING?

YES. I HAVE LEARNED A
VALUABLE LESSON ABOUT
FRIENDSHIP AND ACCEPTANCE
AND WILL NEVER DO IT AGAIN.

OKAY

And early that afternoon

WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST CHANGE INTO SOMETHING ELSE? SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T SCRAMBLE YOUR BRAINS?



I WOULD HAVE HAD TO TURN BACK TO NORMAL FIRST I CAN'T GO DIRECTLY FROM THAT SUPER FORM TO ANOTHER UNLESS IT'S ONE OF THE SECRET IDENTITIES



AND YOU THOUGHT THE HEDONISTIC PARTY FORM WAS YOUR BEST CHOICE?

IT HONESTLY SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME



WELL, I'M NOT HAPPY ABOUT IT BUT YOU ARE SORRY--

SO SO SO SORRY!



AND IT WAS PRETTY INNOCENT AND YOU WERE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MAGIC - I'LL GET OVER IT

SARAH.

AT LEAST NOW YOU KNOW BETTER THAN TO EVER USE THAT FORM AGAIN.



UH. YEAH.





THIS IS WHAT IT TOOK AFTER TWO YEARS AND COUNTLESS APOLOGIZING, I HAD TO HELP SAVE YOUR FRIEND'S LIFE BEFORE YOU'D FORGIVE ME?



AFTER YOU Outed ME



OKAY SEE? YOU DON'T FORGIVE ME. YOU JUST FEEL AN OBLIGATION BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED ON FRIDAY!

WHAT? NO. I--LOOK, I WAS THINKING ABOUT THIS ON THURSDAY TOO



THAT LONG AGO?

JUSTIN. IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS WE WERE BEST FRIENDS. I ACCIDENTALLY DID SOMETHING HORRIBLE TO YOU AND I AM TRULY SORRY FOR THAT BUT I LOVED



HEH.

"LOVED"



I DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE MAD AT YOU, AND I THANK YOU FOR AT LEAST THINKING ABOUT FORGIVING ME ..



BUT WE CAN NEVER GO BACK TO WHAT WE HAD.

I'LL SEE YOU AROUND SCHOOL JUSTIN.

I PROMISE NOT TO BOTHER YOU ANYMORE



Later Monday morning



..THERE WAS SOME SORT
OF JAR ON THE PENDANT

A WHAT?

A PITHOS.



GREEK FOR "JAR" IN THE
ORIGINAL MYTH, PANDORA OPENED
A PITHOS. IT WAS TRANSLATED IN
THE 16TH CENTURY BY ERASMUS
OF ROTTERDAM AS THOUGH IT
HAD SAID PYXIS, GREEK FOR "BOX"

IS THAT
RELEVANT?



AN IMMORTAL WAS
BEHIND THIS.



HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE? YOU
TOLD ME IMMORTALS CAN ONLY
EMPOWER AND GUIDE PEOPLE
WITHOUT INCURRING THE
WRATH OF OTHER IMMORTALS.

BOTTOM LINE
HOW DEX WAS
CONTROLLED.



HE WAS...

EMPOWERED
AND GUIDED.



EVEN IMMORTALS
HAVE LOOPHOLES.



I HAD ASSUMED WE WOULD BE DEALING WITH A POWERFUL 'DIOT

THIS PLAN ASSUMING IT WAS EVEN ABOUT REVEALING MAGIC WAS RIDICULOUSLY CONVOLUTED WITH NUMEROUS WAYS IT COULD FAIL.

IF ONE WANTS TO EXPOSE MAGIC TO THE WORLD THEY DO NOT STAGE MONSTER FIGHTS OUTSIDE OF A MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL COMIC SHOP

AND WHY IS THAT?

THEY MAKE A MONSTER APPEAR ON LIVE TELEVISION IN THE MIDDLE OF A SPORTING EVENT

WE ARE DEALING WITH A BORED ANCIENT BEING. GUARANTEED SUCCESS WOULD BE TOO DULL. THEY WANT CONVOLUTION. THEY WANT THE POTENTIAL FOR FAILURE.

SO.. THAT GIVES US AN ADVANTAGE!

IT'S DOUBLE-EDGED. WE DON'T ACTUALLY KNOW WHAT THEIR EXACT GOALS WERE FOR ALL WE KNOW TONIGHT WENT EXACTLY AS PLANNED IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A COMPLETE FAILURE IT'S POSSIBLE YOU AND DEX WERE SUPPOSED TO DIE

ME SPECIFICALLY?

THAT SHADOW MONSTER ONLY YOU COULD SEE ON THURSDAY WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED HAD YOU NOT SEEN IT?

I WOULD HAVE TALKED TO JUSTIN THEN... AND NOT BEEN THERE TODAY

BE IT TO KEEP OTHERS ALIVE OR AN ATTEMPT ON YOUR LIFE YOUR PRESENCE WAS DESIRED.

SO WHAT IS
HER PLAN?



I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE HER THE
BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT AND TRUST THAT
SHE PREDICTED NOAH'S SURVIVAL...



BUT THAT WOULDN'T
CHANGE THE FACT
THAT SHE PUT HIS LIFE
AND THE LIVES OF
OTHERS IN DANGER

DOES SHE NOT
CARE AT ALL
THAT I AM HIS
GUARDIAN?



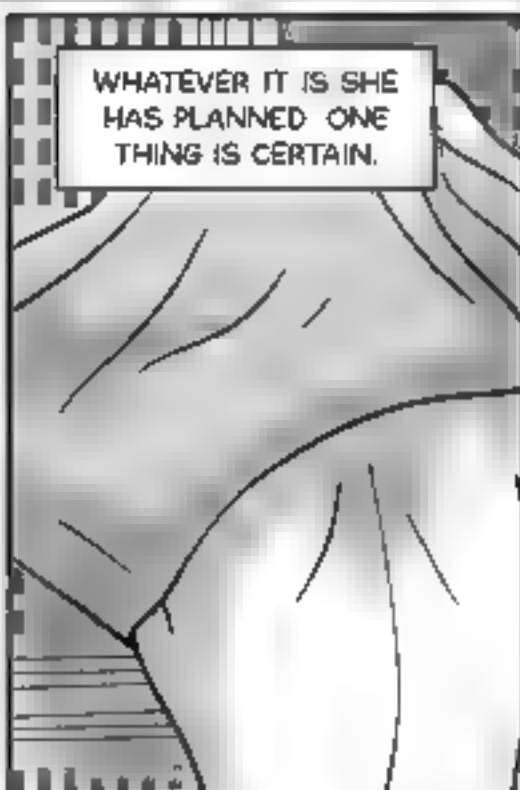
EVEN SO WHAT SHE HAS DONE
SO FAR ALMOST DOESN'T SEEM
CONVOLUTED OR RECKLESS ENOUGH



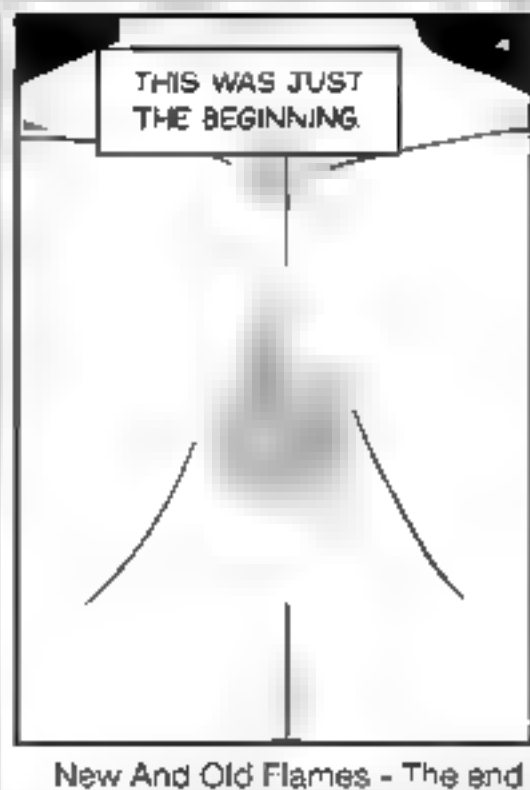
NOT FOR HER.



WHATEVER IT IS SHE
HAS PLANNED ONE
THING IS CERTAIN.



THIS WAS JUST
THE BEGINNING.



New And Old Flames - The end

COMING TO YOU LIVE
FROM SOMEWHERE IN
MOPERVILLE IT'S

Q&A!

I'M LISA AND
HERE'S YOUR HOST

—AMANDA!

HELLO EVERYONE! WE'VE GOT A GREAT
Q&A FOR YOU! LOTS OF QUESTIONS.
MAYBE A FEW ANSWERS. IT'S GOING TO BE
THE BEST Q&A WE'VE DONE ALL YEAR!

NOW WE'VE RECEIVED SEVERAL MAGIC
RELATED QUESTIONS THIS TIME WHICH
ISN'T REALLY OUR THING, SO PLEASE
WELCOME OUR SPECIAL GUEST—

—RAVEN!

I AM NOT
WEARING THIS
HAT

OH MY GOD
HE'S HOT

AMANDA. NO. HE'S
ACTUALLY VERY OLD. AND
I THINK HE MIGHT BE A
VAMPIRE.

I WANT TO HAVE
HIS VAMPIRE BABIES.

HOW MANY
BUTTONS CAN
I UNDO BEFORE
I'M BEING TOO
OBVIOUS?

TAKING OFF YOUR
TIE WAS ALREADY
TOO OBVIOUS.

SO. I
SHOULD GO
FOR BROKE?



OH, UH HI! TODAY'S QUESTION:
"DEX'S MARK WAS LIKE A FAIRY
AND JUSTIN'S LOOKED LIKE
FIRE. DO THE SHAPE OF THOSE
MAGIC MARKS MATTER?"



NO THIS WAS BRIEFLY
ADDRESSED WHEN SUSAN
FIRST INTRODUCED THE
MARKS, BUT RECENT
EVENTS HAVE RESULTED
IN SOME CONFUSION.



WHAT ACTUALLY MATTERS
IS THE SURFACE AREA. THE
AMOUNT NEEDED VARIES BUT
SO LONG AS IT COVERS THAT
SURFACE AREA THE MARKS
CAN BE ANY SHAPE



IF MARKS ARE APPROPRIATELY
SHAPED. IT SUGGESTS THAT
WHOEVER MADE THEM CHOSE
SUCH SHAPES, BUT THEY
COULD HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY
UNRELATED OR ABSTRACT



DOES WHAT BODY PART THE
MARK IS MADE ON MATTER?



NO. BUT IT'S PROBABLY BEST TO MAKE IT
SOMEWHERE THAT'S NORMALLY COVERED

QUICK! IS THERE ANY WAY I CAN RESPOND
THAT WOULD BE VAGUELY FLIRTATIOUS?!

SERIOUSLY?



OUR NEXT QUESTION IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMON ONES OF ALL TIME "WE ALL KNOW ABOUT FEMALE VARIANT NUMBER 5 (FV5) BUT WHAT'S MALE VARIANT NUMBER 5 (MV5) ON THE TRANSFORMATION GUN?"



TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION, WE ARE JOINED LIVE VIA SATELLITE BY TEDD!



HELLO!



SO TEDD, WHAT IS MV5?

..WAIT WHAT?

NOTHING.



THE "V1" VARIANTS ARE THE BASIS FOR UP TO FOUR OTHER VARIANTS OF A FORM. IF I DON'T PROGRAM ANYTHING SPECIAL FOR THOSE EXTRA VARIANTS, THEN THEY BASICALLY JUST WORK LIKE IDENTICAL COPIES OF V1

MALE FORMS DON'T INTEREST ME, SO...



ACTUALLY THERE IS A FIFTH MALE VARIANT! REMEMBER MY BIRTHDAY PARTY? I HAD TO MAKE MALE VARIANTS FOR MYSELF SUSAN, NANASE AND SARAH! I SAVED MINE AS MV2 BEFORE THE PARTY



OH! HUH. SO THAT WOULD MAKE MV5 THE FORM USED BY WHOEVER MORPHED LAST..



..THERE ARE GOING TO BE RIOTS OVER THIS, AREN'T THERE?



NEXT QUESTION! "IF RAVEN IS AN ELF AND NOT A VAMPIRE WHY DOES HE HAVE BLACK HAIR?"

..WAIT, WHAT?

THEY ARE LIKELY THINKING OF ELVES IN A FANTASY "ORLANDO BLOOM" SORT OF SENSE

CLEAN SHAVEN, ANDROGYNOUS, PALE-SKINNED PEOPLE WITH LIGHT HAIR WHO ARE NATURALLY ADAPTED TO FORESTS.

AM I SUPPOSED TO BE SHOOTING SOMETHING WITH THIS?

WAIT, HOW DOES THAT MAKE SENSE? HAVING PALE SKIN AND LIGHT HAIR WOULD MAKE THEM LIGHTER THAN ANYTHING ELSE IN THE FOREST THEY'D STAND OUT LIKE SORE THUMBS!

NOT ONLY THAT BUT ANY LIGHT SHINING ONTO THEIR SKIN THROUGH THE CANOPY WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE THE AMBIENT LIGHT LEVELS AROUND THEM!

WELL, CRAPETH.

Woooo...

OF COURSE THEIR CLOTHES HELP BUT THAT'S NOT AN INNATE ADAPTATION. THAT'S TECHNOLOGY!

SO BEING IN TUNE WITH THE FORESTS IS A CULTURAL ADAPTATION AND NOT A MANDATORY ASPECT OF ELFKIND!

THERE COULD BE MOUNTAIN ELVES!

AND DESERT ELVES!

SPACE ELVES!

OHMYGOD VULCANS!

IN CASE IT'S NOT APPARENT THE POINT IS THAT "ELVES" IN THIS UNIVERSE ARE SIMPLY IMMORTAL-HUMAN HYBRIDS.

OH. THIS QUESTION IS ANCIENT "BACK BEFORE ELLIOT'S FIGHT WITH NANASE GREG SAID SOMETHING ABOUT ELLIOT SUMMONING INNER DEMONS."

"WHAT WAS UP WITH THAT?"

SIMPLY PUT? NOTHING. THEY WERE BEING OVERLY DRAMATIC FOR THE SAKE OF AN EXHIBITION MATCH. ELLIOT DIDN'T HAVE AN EQUIVALENT FOR NANASE'S MAGIC. SO THEY MADE THAT UP

WHICH WAS A RETCON!

HOLYCRAP
WHAT

THE ORIGINAL IDEA WAS THAT ELLIOT HAD A LOT OF PENT UP RAGE THAT COULD BE UNLEASHED THROUGH A SPECIAL MOVE

...MAKING HIM SIGNIFICANTLY MORE POWERFUL!

BUT KINDA CRAZY AND OUT OF CONTROL.

WHICH WAS *SUPER AWESOME*, BUT IT WAS NOTHING NEW AND IT DIDN'T REALLY WORK FROM A STORY PERSPECTIVE

HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?!

AMANDA I'M SORRY TO INTERRUPT YOUR SHOW BUT I'M AFRAID I ALREADY ANSWERED THAT QUESTION ABOUT ELLIOT SUMMONING INNER DEMONS IN THE LAST Q&A.

YOU DID? I DON'T REMEMBER THAT

YOU WERE PRETTY SHRUNK AT THE TIME BUT

I DON'T MEAN TO BE RUDE. BUT HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN HOW TO BUTTON YOUR SHIRT?

OH. WELL, AH. THE THING ABOUT THAT IS

OH I SEE

AMANDA. GO CHANGE INTO SOMETHING ALLURING BUT APPROPRIATE THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT LOOK LIKE YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO DRESS YOURSELF I WILL ANSWER QUESTIONS WHILE YOU DO

BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS!

I'LL HELP!

OF COURSE YOU WILL

IS THAT THE NEXT QUESTION ON THE TELEPROMPTER. OR DID YOU ALREADY TELL THEM THAT NOAH ISN'T A BLOOD RELATIVE OF RAVEN?

NO BUT YOU JUST DID. WE'RE STILL ON-PANEL

...SON OF A--

ALRIGHT I CAN DO THIS. I CAN ANSWER A QUESTION AND KNOW THAT I'M ANSWERING IT

AND THAT QUESTION IS. "IS TIME TRAVEL POSSIBLE IN EGS, AND IF NOT WHY NOT?"



NO IT IS NOT POSSIBLE THE POTENTIAL TO VISIT SIMILAR DIMENSIONS THAT ARE "AHEAD" OR "BEHIND" THE MAIN DIMENSION ARE ABOUT AS CLOSE AS EGGS WILL EVER GET TO ACTUAL TIME TRAVEL



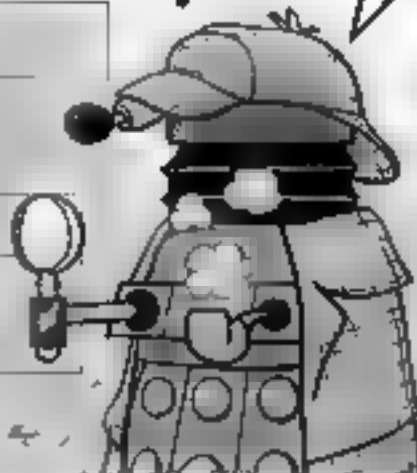
WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT TIME TRAVEL HAS FAN SERVICE POTENTIAL...

THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.



AND THAT SERIES HEAVILY FOCUSED ON TIME TRAVEL CAN BE EXCELLENT .

EXTRAPOLATE!



...AND IT CAN BE A FUN DIVERSION FOR SERIES WHERE IT'S NOT NORMALLY THE MAIN FOCUS.

DO YOU SELL WHALES?

CERTAINLY! WHAT'YA NEED?

HUMPBCKS.



OOH, FRESH OUTTA HUMPBCKS.

...THE PRIMARY REASON TIME TRAVEL WILL NEVER BE IN EGS IS PRETTY SIMPLE

GRACE FINALLY SNAPPED AND DESTROYED HALF OF MOPERVILLE

TO THE UNDO BUTTON!



OUR NEXT QUESTION ASKS
"IS THERE ANYTHING MAGIC
DEFINITELY CAN'T DO?" FOR THE
ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION. I
SHALL DEFER TO MR. RAVEN



ASIDE FROM TIME TRAVEL?

NO

ASIDE FROM TIME TRAVEL

NO?

NO.



ALL THAT CAN REALLY BE KNOWN FOR
CERTAIN ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF A
GIVEN MAGIC USER AT A GIVEN TIME



BEYOND THAT,
THERE IS SIMPLY
NO KNOWN WAY
OF DETERMINING
WHAT MAGIC IN
GENERAL IS
INCAPABLE OF

I EXPECTED YOU TO AT LEAST
RESPOND WITH THE STANDARD "IT CAN'T
MAKE SOMEONE LOVE YOU" LIMITATION.



AH. I CAN'T HONESTLY CLAIM WITH CERTAINTY
THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE, BUT I AM UNAWARE OF
IT EVER WORKING IN A "TRUE LOVE" SENSE

IT IS CERTAINLY POSSIBLE TO MAKE ONESELF
SUPERNATURALLY MORE ATTRACTIVE.



WHAT THE HELL IS IN
THIS BODY SPRAY?

BUT ANYTHING BEYOND THAT WOULD AMOUNT
TO SIMPLE EVIL MIND CONTROL.



HEY, THIS ISN'T MIND
CONTROL! JUSTIN'S JUST
HAVING A WEIRD DREAM!

MY DREAM?
NO AH.. THIS..
IS ONE OF
TEDD'S DREAMS!
YEAH.

WE'VE RECEIVED A LOT OF FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS TO THAT LAST QUESTION ABOUT WHAT ISN'T POSSIBLE WITH MAGIC.



I WASN'T SAYING EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE WITH MAGIC I WAS SAYING WE DON'T KNOW WHAT ISN'T POSSIBLE DOES THAT ANSWER ALL OF THEM?

PRETTY MUCH. HERE'S A FRESH QUESTION: "DO ANY OF THE WINGED CHARACTERS ACTUALLY USE THEIR WINGS TO FLY?"



I... *MAYBE?* AT THE VERY LEAST THEY'RE USING SOME MANNER OF LEVITATION TO KEEP THEMSELVES UP BUT IT'S ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT THEIR WINGS ARE SOMEHOW INVOLVED IN THAT LEVITATION.



THERE ARE MANY REASONS WHY WINGS ALONE SHOULDN'T BE ENOUGH TO FLY BY PHYSICS ALONE EVEN NANASE'S SMALL FAIRY FORM SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO FLY LET ALONE VLAD. DRAGONS OR PONIES.



PONIES?

SORRY THAT SLIPPED OUT

DO. DO YOU WATCH MY LITTLE PONY?

I DON'T BUT...



I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE TAKING NOTES.

I HAVE A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT FRIENDSHIP



I'VE BEEN TOLD TO PREFACE THE NEXT ANSWER WITH THE WARNING THAT YOU WILL BE DISAPPOINTED AND POSSIBLY BE DRIVEN TO RIOT IN THE STREETS WITH PITCHFORKS, TORCHES, AND TRAINED OCELOTS? REALLY?



"WHATEVER HAPPENED WITH EGS:NP? YOU SAID IT WAS GOING TO GO ON A WEEKLONG HIATUS. AND THAT HAS BECOME CENTURIES. WILL IT EVER RETURN?"



EGS:NP IS ON INDEFINITE HIATUS. IT WILL RETURN *IF AND WHEN* I HAVE THE TIME AND IDEAS NECESSARY TO CREATE IT.



I HAVE NOT CHANGED THE COMIC CURRENTLY POSTED THERE BECAUSE I DO NOT WANT TO GET PEOPLE'S HOPES UP, AND IN SPITE OF MENTIONING THIS IN SEVERAL PLACES, I *STILL* GET ENDLESS INQUIRIES FROM--



WHY DON'T YOU JUST UPDATE THE COMMENTARY?



...WHAT?



EXPLAIN THAT THERE'S AN INDEFINITE HIATUS IN THE LAST EGS:NP COMIC'S COMMENTARY IT WOULD BE EASY TO FIND AND WOULDN'T RESULT IN ANY CONFUSION ABOUT IT STARTING UP AGAIN.



...OH. YEAH, THAT...

...THAT'S A GOOD IDEA.



CAN SOMEBODY PUT THAT DRAMATIC FIRE OUT?

OH, HEY! YOU
LOOK GOOD I WAS
WORRIED LISA WAS
GOING TO PUT YOU
IN A SHOWGIRL
OUTFIT OR
SOMETHING.

I HAVE NO IDEA
WHY YOU WOULD
HAVE SUCH A
CONCERN.

SO I GUESS I
CAN GO BACK TO
SCIENCE NOW.

OH.
GOOD.

DON'T BE
SILLY! THERE'S
PLENTY OF
CHAIRS. STICK
AROUND!

OUR NEXT QUESTION HAS BECOME
MORE AND MORE COMMON EVER
SINCE NEW AND OLD FLAMES: "ARE
JUSTIN'S ILLUSORY POWERS CANON?"

WAY BACK IN THE DAY, JUSTIN USED AN ILLUSION TO
FRIGHTEN A SMALL CHILD FOR MOCKING A CHILDREN'S
CARD GAME. BUT THE KID WAS IN JUNIOR HIGH AND
WEARING A SILLY HAT SO EVERYONE WAS COOL WITH IT

SO. IS THAT CANON? YES! GREG ELLIOT
ELLEN. JUSTIN AND NANASE ALL HAVE LIMITED
ILLUSORY POWERS. THEY'RE MOSTLY JUST USED
TO MAKE THEMSELVES LOOK MORE AWESOME.

...AND
MAYBE
CRAZY

SO WHEN THEY
MADE THEIR HANDS
GLOW WHILE
PUNCHING. IT WAS.

...ENTIRELY
POINTLESS!

"WE KNOW THAT USUALLY WHEN SOMEONE WHO IS HETEROSEXUAL SWITCHES SEXES. " IS IT WEIRD THAT "USUALLY" CAN BE SAID IN THAT SENTENCE WITHOUT IRONY?"

"...THEY WIND UP BISEXUAL RELATIVE TO THEIR NEW FORM. IS IT DIFFERENT FOR ELLIOT'S SECRET IDENTITY FORMS?"



THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION. AT THE VERY LEAST MILD-MANNERED ELLIOT SEEMS TO BE MORE INTO MEN THAN "NORMAL" FEMALE ELLIOT IS. SHE *MIGHT* NOT FIND WOMEN ATTRACTIVE

WANT TO JOIN THE "NON-CANON" CLUB?

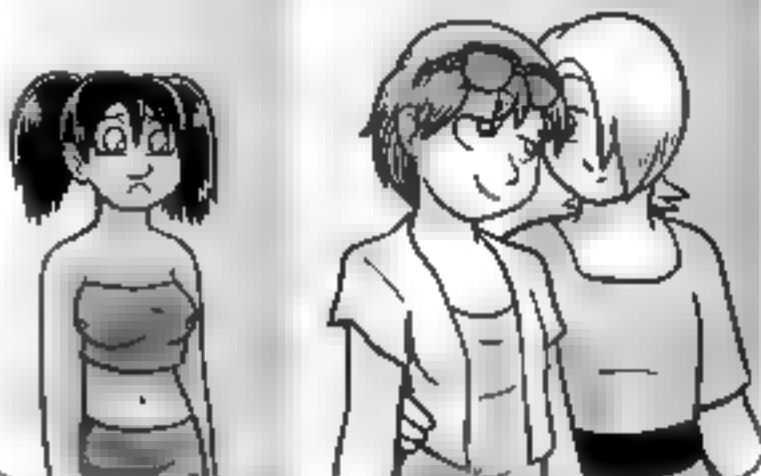


THE "GOTH" FORM, MEANWHILE, IS A BIT MORE AMBIGUOUS. ELLIOT CLAIMED TO LIKE IT, BUT ADMIRING ONE'S OWN HOTNESS ISN'T DEFINITIVE EVIDENCE

MIND-WARPING OR NO MIND-WARPING I AM WAY TOO SEXY TO BE ANGSTY!



AND THEN THERE'S THE "PARTY" FORM, WHO PROBABLY *ISN'T* A LESBIAN BUT ACTS LIKE IT TO PUT ON A SHOW FOR THE MEN, ALL THE WHILE GIVING THE WOMEN SHE MAKES OUT WITH FALSE HOPE BEFORE LEAVING WITH SOME GUY!



BUT THAT UH. THAT'S JUST A THEORY AND NOT AT ALL BASED ON ANYTHING FROM MY FIRST YEAR OF COLLEGE



"HOW DOES SUSAN KNOW SHE'S NOT A LESBIAN? THERE'S NO INDICATION THAT SHE'S EXPERIMENTED. UNLESS YOU COUNT WHILE BEING TRANSFORMED. AND WE DON'T"

I DON'T SEE WHY SHE'D NEED TO EXPERIMENT ISN'T THAT SOMETHING YOU JUST KNOW?

NANASE DIDN'T KNOW

BUT NANASE WAS IN DENIAL. WOULDN'T SUSAN JUST NATURALLY KNOW?

IT'S NOT ALWAYS THAT SIMPLE. ESPECIALLY AT THAT AGE AND

WAIT THE ONLY REAL EVIDENCE WE HAVE THAT SUSAN IS ATTRACTED TO MEN WAS HER SHOWING INTEREST IN JUSTIN AFTER FINDING OUT THAT THEY HAD THINGS IN COMMON.

DO WE KNOW IF SHE EVEN NORMALLY HAS A SEX DRIVE?

I'M STILL STUCK ON THE WHOLE "HAVE TO EXPERIMENT" THING. IS THAT REALLY TRUE FOR SOME PEOPLE?

OTHER THAN THAT SHE'S BEEN ATTRACTED TO WOMEN WHILE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATION AND FREAKY PHEROMONES.

OH DON'T LOOK SO SHOCKED. I APPROACH EVERYTHING SCIENTIFICALLY

AND YOUR RESULTS...?

ARE MY BUSINESS.

DO YOU THINK
RAVEN'S NOTICED MY
NEW OUTFIT YET?



I DON'T KNOW IT'S HARD TO
TELL WHAT THAT GUY'S THINKING

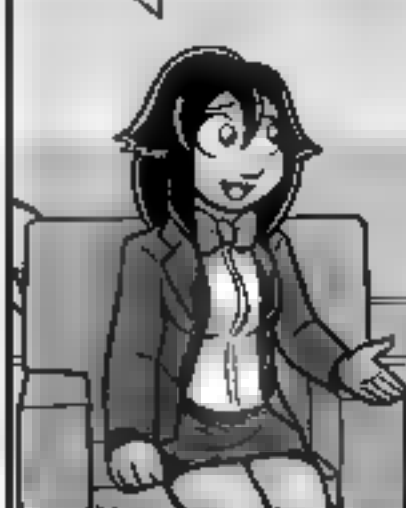
DOES MICHAEL GENUINELY
LIKE YOGURT OR IS IT
SIMPLY AFFORDABLE GIVEN
A BURNED SPY'S BUDGET?



OH, HI! TODAY'S QUESTION:
"WHERE DO THOSE CHARTS
THAT OCCASIONALLY SHOW UP
COME FROM? DOES TEDD'S
DAD HAVE A MAKE CHART'
SPELL? WHAT ABOUT ELLIOT'S
PARENTS?"



ISN'T THIS SORT OF LIKE
ASKING ABOUT BADASS HAIR
IN THE WIND WHEN THERE IS
NO WIND? IT SHOULDN'T BE
EXPLAINED. IT'S LIKE HAIR
FAIRIES. BUT WITH CHARTS.



OH, LISA!
HAIR FAIRIES
AREN'T REAL

I KNOW BUT
THAT'S NOT--

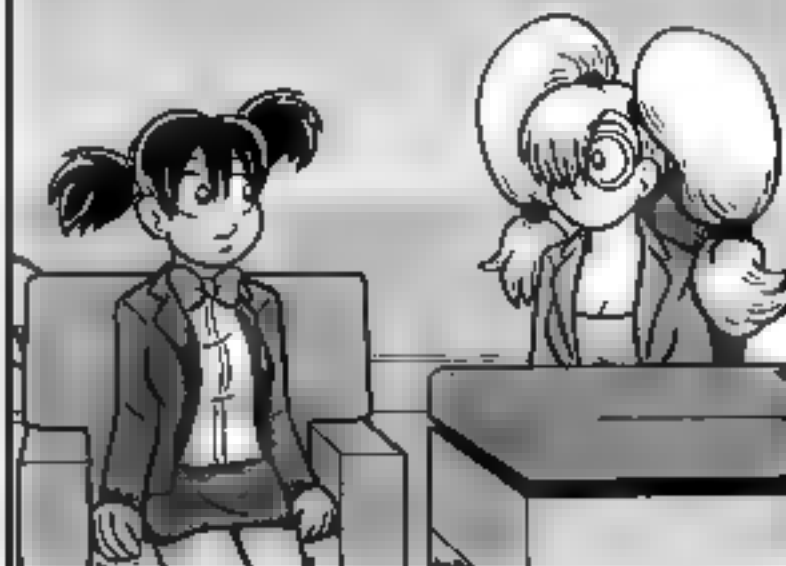
WHAT
THE?!



HEY!



SO TO ANSWER YOUR
QUESTION ABOUT CHARTS. HAIR
FAIRIES *MIGHT* BE REAL.

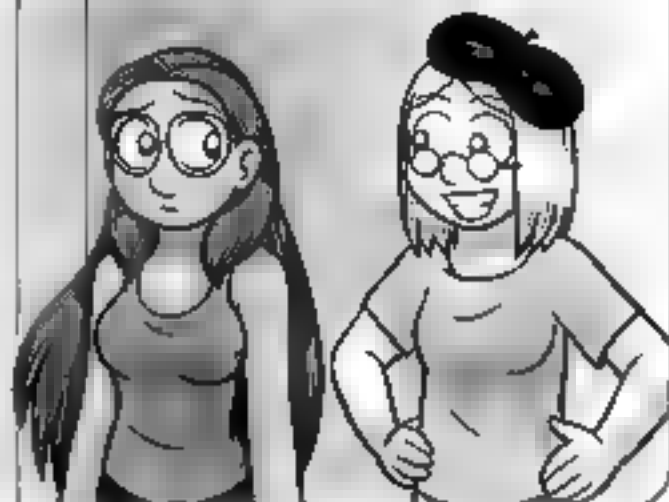


"WHY WAS IT CONSIDERED A BIG DEAL THAT 'VLADIA' DOESN'T HAVE CHEEK ANTENNAE? GRACE CAN MORPH HERS AWAY JUST FINE"

I'M GOING TO GO FIND A COMB OR AN OUTFIT THAT GOES WITH THIS HAIR.



GRACE IS ABLE TO MORPH HER ANTENNAE AWAY BUT SHE WASN'T ALWAYS ABLE TO. AND THE REASON SHE'S ABLE TO NOW DOESN'T APPLY TO VLADIA AS WE MENTIONED IN A PREVIOUS Q&A, IT TAKES A CLONE FORM TRANSFORMATION TO MORPH AWAY SEYUNOLU ANTENNAE



GRACE, BEING PART LESPUKO CAN MIX AND MATCH FORMS, WHICH MEANS THAT SHE GAINED THE POTENTIAL TO MORPH AWAY HER ANTENNAE WHILE IN VARIOUS FORMS ONCE SHE HAD THE CLAIRE CLONE FORM.



VLADIA IS A GREATER CHIMERA (A SEYUNOLU WHO IS PART URYUOM), BUT THAT MOSTLY JUST MEANS SHE HAS ANTENNAE AND CAN GAIN FORMS FROM COSMETIC MORPH DEVICES (CMDS) LIKE THE TRANSFORMATION GUN. SHE CANNOT MIX AND MATCH LIKE GRACE CAN.



IT'S ALSO WORTH REPEATING THAT GREATER CHIMERAS ARE BORN WITH IMPERFECT MORPHING ABILITIES THAT ARE CORRECTED ONCE THEY'VE BEEN TRANSFORMED AT LEAST ONCE BY A CMD. WHICH EXPLAINS WHY GRACE MORPHS DIFFERENTLY NOW THAN SHE DID AT THE START OF THE COMIC



OF COURSE THIS IS ALL OLD--

--WHAT? OH.

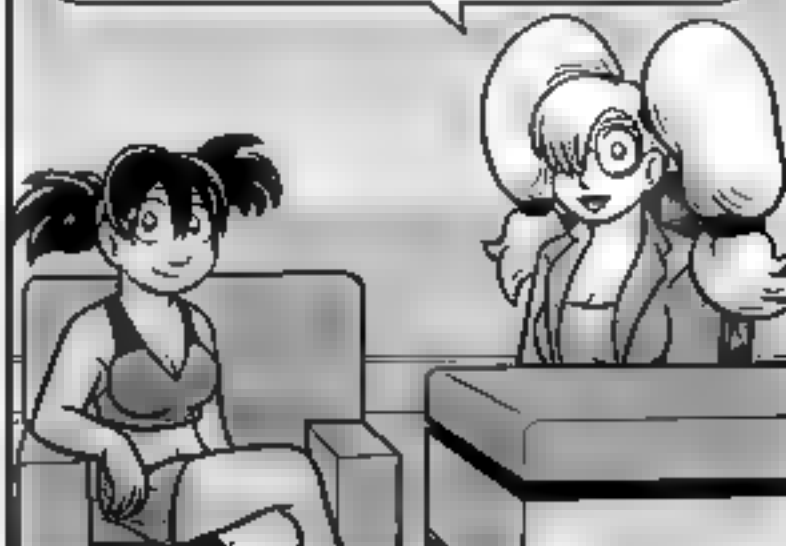


APPARENTLY DAN FORGOT TO EXPLAIN THAT LAST PART WAYYYY BACK IN PAINTED BLACK.

YAY NEW INFO?



AND OUR FINAL QUESTION BEFORE THE Q&A WRAP UP: "WHAT IF SOMEONE WITH TATTOOS OR PIERCINGS TRANSFORMS? AFTER ALL, THE TATTOOS ARE JUST INK AND THE PIERCINGS PRESENT THEIR OWN SET OF PROBLEMS"



WELL, LOGICALLY THERE SHOULD BE AN ISSUE WITH TATTOOS. BUT IF YOU'LL RECALL, TRANSFORMATIONS ARE SOMEHOW ABLE TO KEEP TRACK OF HAIRSTYLES, TOO

YOU NEVER DID ANSWER MY QUESTION ABOUT THAT

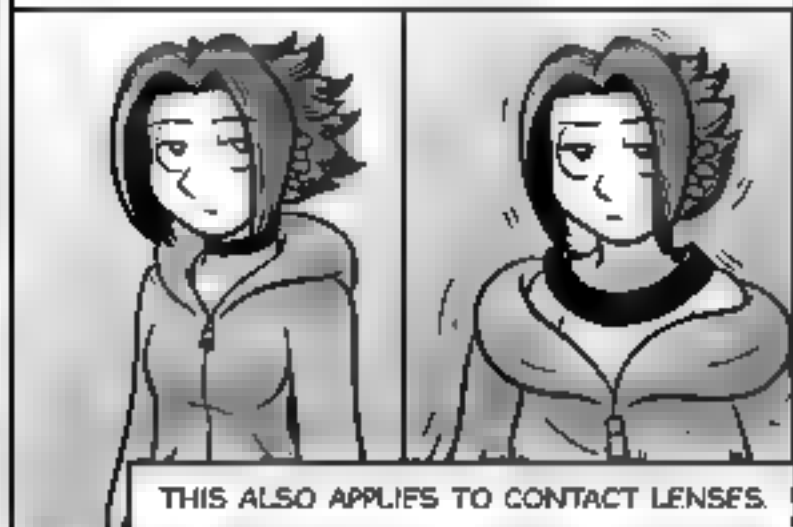
OH JUST GO WITH IT



THE TATTOO MIGHT WIND UP NOT LOOKING AS GOOD WHILE TRANSFORMED BUT IT WON'T VANISH. AND IT WILL BE BACK AS IT SHOULD BE ONCE THE TRANSFORMATION IS OVER.



AS FOR PIERCINGS THERE SHOULD PROBABLY BE ALL SORTS OF PROBLEMS. ESPECIALLY IF SHRINKING, BUT PIERCINGS GO UNDER THE SKIN AND ARE NATURALLY AFFECTED BY TRANSFORMATIONS. THEY WILL SHRINK AND SHIFT AS NECESSARY WITHOUT IT BEING A PROBLEM.



WHAT? THIS IS EL GOONISH SHIVE TRANSFORMATION CONVENIENCE IS PRACTICALLY LAW AROUND HERE. UNLESS YOUR NAME IS VLAD

JOIN US TOMORROW FOR THE Q&A WRAP UP WHERE WE'LL--



FORGET THE WRAP UP YOU NEED TO ASK RAVEN OUT BEFORE THE STORY KICKS BACK IN!

WHAT? B-BUT..

SHE'S RIGHT! MAKE YOUR MOVE!



UM.. RAVEN?

YES? IS THIS
MADNESS OVER?

UM. THE Q&A IS OVER, BUT I
WAS WONDERING IF YOU UM.
MIGHT POSSIBLY CONSIDER
MAYBE POTENTIALLY
CONCEIVABLY PERCHANCE--

GET TO THE POINT.

--GOING ON A
DATE WITH ME ?

OH! AH...

I'M SORRY I.. I'M NOT USED TO
THIS SORT OF THING. I'M NOT SURE
IF IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA. I HAVE
A VERY COMPLICATED LIFE AND--

YEAH BUT THIS IS ALL
OUTSIDE OF CONTINUITY

THERE WILL
BE DANCING.

SQUEE!

Q&A #5 - The End

...IT'S STARTING TO
MAKE SENSE TO ME GRACE. I
THINK I CAN ACTUALLY MAKE
SCIENTIFIC SENSE OF MAGIC!

THAT'S
GREAT
TEDD!

THIS IS THE BASELINE! THE JRYVOM TRANS-
FORMATION SIMULATOR BASES ITS DURATION
EXPECTATIONS ON WHAT WOULD HAPPEN WITH
AN AVERAGE HUMAN!
WITH THIS DATA.

...I'M STILL NOT SURE HOW TO KEEP TRACK OF
ELLIOT'S ENERGY BUILDUP WITHOUT RESORTING
TO JUST LETTING IT BUILD UP HE COULD BE
DOING TWICE AS WELL AND THAT STUPID LOUD
WAND THING WOULD GIVE THE SAME READING

SO ONE IS TOTALLY NOT RIGHT FOR THE SPELL
RESISTANCE MODE I'VE GOT THIS HUNCH ABOUT
FIVE THAT WOULD MEAN THE TRANSFORMATION
GUN HAS A CONSISTENT SPELL POWER OF
TWENTY, BUT EXTREME VARIATIONS IN.

ELLIOT WAS TOTALLY CHEESED OFF BUT IT
WAS WORTH IT! SURPRISE SEVERELY IMPACTS
SPELL RESISTANCE ..

BUT HAS NO
APPARENT IMPACT
ON ENCHANTMENT
RESISTANCE! I'M
HOPING THAT I CAN
MODIFY THE
SIMULATIONS TO...

...HAVE I MENTIONED THAT I THINK
I'VE SOLVED THE ENCHANTMENT
DURATION FORMULA?







EVERY TIME I TALK TO TEDD THESE DAYS, HE GOES ON AND ON ABOUT MAGIC AND SCIENCE AND HIS EXPERIMENTS. IT'S INTERESTING BUT... ARGH! I NEED A BREAK!

HAVE YOU TALKED TO TEDD ABOUT THIS?

NO, I KNOW I *SHOULD*, BUT I DON'T WANT TO DISCOURAGE HIM. HE'S MAKING SO MUCH PROGRESS! IT'S AMAZING AND HE WANTS TO SHARE IT ALL WITH ME BUT

OKAY OKAY TEDD'S IN OBSESSIVE GEEK MODE OVERDRIVE. GOTCHA. HAVE YOU TRIED GOING ON A DATE?

A DATE?

YOU KNOW OUT OF THE BASEMENT AND AWAY FROM MAD SCIENCE?

OOH, I LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT

SO TAKE HIM OUT! THE FRESH AIR WILL DO YOU BOTH SOME GOOD.

YOU'RE RIGHT! AND I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT WE SHOULD DO!

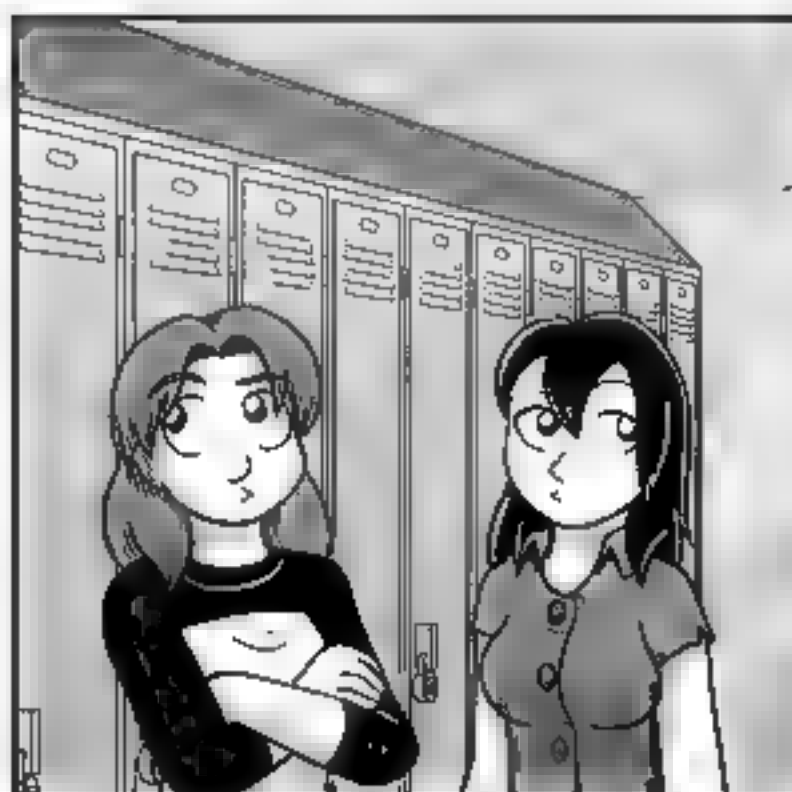
AND WHAT'S THAT?

WE SHOULD GO ON A DOUBLE-DATE!

UH...

WHAT?







Thursday, the day after Wednesday but before Friday

YOU AGREED
TO THE DATE?

IT'S MORE LIKE I WAS ORDERED
TO THE DATE. BUT YEAH. I
GUESS I HAVE GOTTEN CAUGHT
UP IN MY SCIENCE LATELY

NANASE AND ELLEN.. THAT
GONNA BE AWKWARD FOR YOU?

OF COURSE IT'S GOING TO BE
AWKWARD. I DON'T KNOW NANASE
ALL THAT WELL. AND I HAVE NO
IDEA HOW ELLEN FEELS ABOUT ME.

ELLEN SEEMS
TO LIKE YOU

SHE HUGGED ME ONE MORNING
RIGHT OUT OF THE BLUE BUT
GIVEN HER, YOU KNOW "HISTORY"
I THINK US NEVER HANGING OUT
SAYS SOMETHING.

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TRY
AND CANCEL OR ANY
THING, ARE YOU?

I DUNNO WE NEVER HANG
OUT ALONE IF I SEE HER. IT'S
BECAUSE SHE'S WITH GRACE

AND NOT FOCUS ON HOW YOU'LL SORT
OF BE ON A DATE WITH YOUR COUSIN.

DUDE!

SORRY

NO WAY! GRACE REALLY WANTS
THIS AND I WANT TO GIVE IT TO
HER. I'LL JUST FOCUS ON SMALL
TALK AND KEEPING GRACE HAPPY

I AM NOT DATING MY COUSIN! REMEMBER
THAT ALWAYS, RANDOM CLASSMATE!

LET ME SEE IF I UNDERSTAND THIS. YOU'RE BOTHERED THAT SHE'S NOT BOTHERED?

YES.

DID I GET TELEPORTED INTO A SITCOM? YOUR GIRLFRIEND DOESN'T CARE ABOUT MEN YOU'VE DATED IN THE PAST THAT IS A GOOD THING.

LOVE IS NOT LOGICAL!

SHE SHOULD INSTINCTIVELY WANT TO CLUB MY EXES AND CLAIM ME AS HER WOMAN!

YOU'RE COMPLAINING ABOUT A LACK OF NEANDERTHAL-ESQUE BEHAVIOR FROM YOUR GIRLFRIEND.

LOVE MAKES NEANDERTHALS OF US ALL AT LEAST, IT'S SUPPOSED TO!

I SORT OF GET WHERE YOU'RE COMING FROM, BUT IT'D BE LIKE IF AN ORANGE ONLY LIKED OTHER ORANGES AND THEIR ORANGE PARTNER GOT JEALOUS OF A BUNCH OF OLD APPLES THE OTHER ORANGE USED TO DATE

..WHAT?

YOU KNOW HOW WE ALL DREAMT OF DATING NANASE SOMEDAY?

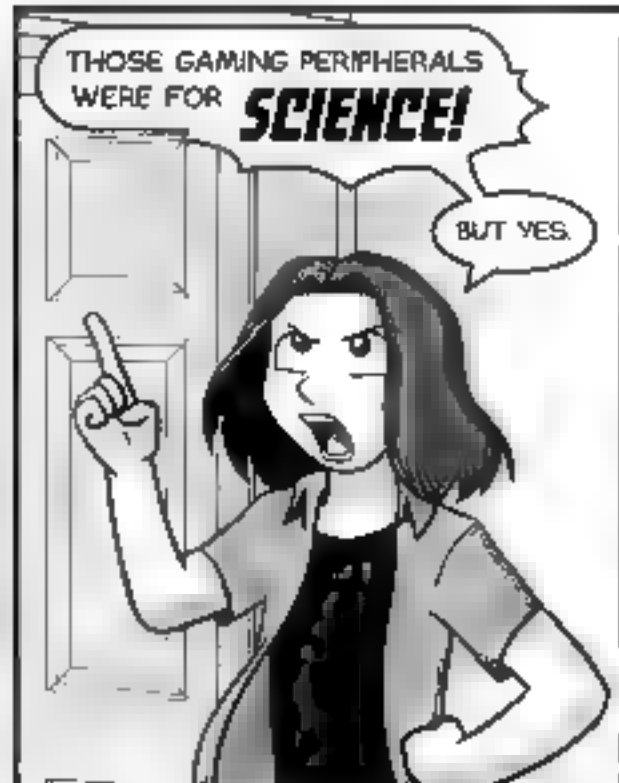
YEAH?

THAT DREAM IS DEAD. BUT SOMETHING MAGICAL HAS TAKEN ITS PLACE



HEY DAD? I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD BORROW SOME MONEY FOR MY DATE WITH GRACE

ALREADY BLEW YOUR ALLOWANCE ON GAMING PERIPHERALS EH?



THOSE GAMING PERIPHERALS WERE FOR **SCIENCE!**

BUT YES.



I'M JUST GIVING YOU A HARD TIME. I ALREADY GAVE GRACE SOME MONEY FOR YOUR DATE



GRACE? BUT I'M USUALLY THE MAN! AREN'T I SUPPOSED TO PAY?



TEDD, WHILE IT IS GENTLEMANLY FOR THE MAN TO PAY FOR THINGS. WE LIVE IN A MODERN, PROGRESSIVE AGE

THERE IS NO SHAME IN SHARING THE COST OF A DATE



BESIDES WHICH, REGARDLESS OF WHO HOLDS THE MONEY, I'M STILL THE ONE PAYING.



ER, YEAH. GOOD POINT THANK YOU

YOU UM, WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO HAVE ANY ADVICE ON WHAT TO WEAR, WOULD YOU?



TO A DINNER AND BOWLING DATE?

YEAH.

CLEAN SOCKS.

<WILL YOU BE HOME FOR DINNER TOMORROW NIGHT NANASE OR WILL YOU BE ON ANOTHER OF YOUR "PLAY DATES"?>

<IT'S A SERIOUS RELATIONSHIP, MOTHER>

<OF COURSE IT IS.>

<AND NO I WON'T BE HERE ELLEN AND I WILL BE OUT WITH TEDD AND HIS GIRLFRIEND.>

<VERY WELL WE'LL SAVE PIZZA NIGHT FOR->

* Translated from the Na'Vi language--er, Japanese

<TEDD HAS A GIRLFRIEND?!>

<IS SHE NICE? IS SHE COMMITTED TO THEIR RELATIONSHIP? SHE'S NOT JUST TOYING WITH HIM, IS SHE?>

<WHAT?! NO! SHE'S A FRIEND OF MINE SHE'S VERY NICE!>

<I CAN'T BELIEVE IT A GIRLFRIEND! HE USED TO BE SO SHY YOU NEED TO LOOK AFTER HIM, NANASE! HELP KEEP YOUR LITTLE COUSIN FROM GETTING HURT!>

<LITTLE? I'M BARELY OLDER THAN-->

<NANASE THIS IS IMPORTANT YOUR CURRENT DALLIANCE NOTWITHSTANDING YOU KNOW FAR MORE ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS THAN TEDD POSSIBLY COULD. YOU SIMPLY MUST HELP HIM!>

<DALLIANCE?! ELLEN AND I ARE-->

<PROMISE TO HELP TEDD OR I CANCEL PIZZA NIGHT.>

<MY WISDOM IS HIS.>

The day before the day before two days after Friday (Friday)



IS GRACE
STILL GETTING
READY?

YEP

SHE'S NOT
DRESSING UP TOO
MUCH, IS SHE? A
BOWLING DATE IS
DATING CASUAL AT
ITS CASUALEST



NAH. IT'S JUST THAT WE
BOTH LIVE HERE SHE WANTS
THE DATE TO "BEGIN" WITH
US LEAVING THE HOUSE



SO. SHE'S JUST WAITING UP
THERE ALONE WHILE YOU SIT
HERE WITH THE NEW BIG
SCREEN TV?

IT WAS HER IDEA.
BESIDES, ELLEN AND NANASE
SHOULD BE HERE SOON.



I'M A LITTLE
SURPRISED THEY'RE
NOT ALREADY HERE. I
COULD HAVE SWORN I
HEARD A CAR PULL
INTO THE DRIVEWAY



YOU PROBABLY JUST
HEARD SOMETHING ON
THE TV OR JEREMY

MEREOW?



WE SHOULD
PROBABLY GO RING
THE DOORBELL

GOOD POINT FIVE
MORE MINUTES.

PROBABLY BUT HOW
MUCH KISSING DO YOU
SEE US DOING DURING
THE ACTUAL DATE?

Approximately five minutes and thirty two seconds later



GOTTA STOP THINKING ABOUT SCIENCE. YOU'RE STARTING TO SOUND LIKE THOSE SCIENCE NUTS FROM THE PORTAL GAMES.



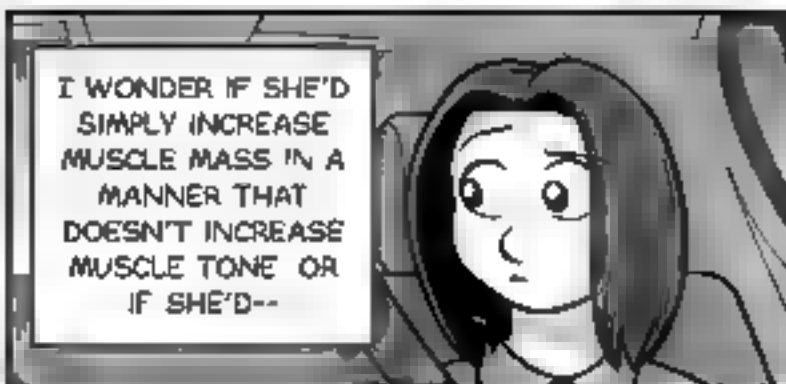
YOU'RE ON A DATE WITH GRACE! THINK SEXY THOUGHTS. THINK SEXY THOUGHTS

IF THE BALL IS TOO HEAVY FOR ME IS IT OKAY IF I DISCREETLY INCREASE MY STRENGTH?

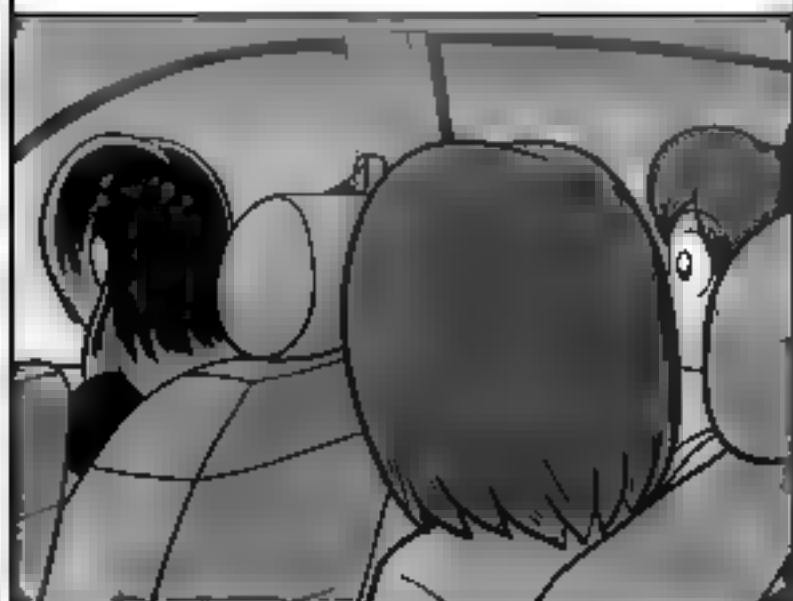
YOU WON'T NEED TO THEY'VE GOT A BUNCH OF DIFFERENTLY WEIGHTED BALLS YOU CAN USE



I WONDER IF SHE'D SIMPLY INCREASE MUSCLE MASS IN A MANNER THAT DOESN'T INCREASE MUSCLE TONE OR IF SHE'D--



IT REALLY IS INTERESTING THAT NANASE'S HAIR IS GROWING SO FAST COULD IT BE THAT SHE'S GENERATING SOME MAGIC THAT SHE CAN'T USE, AND THE GROWTH IS A MANIFESTATION OF--



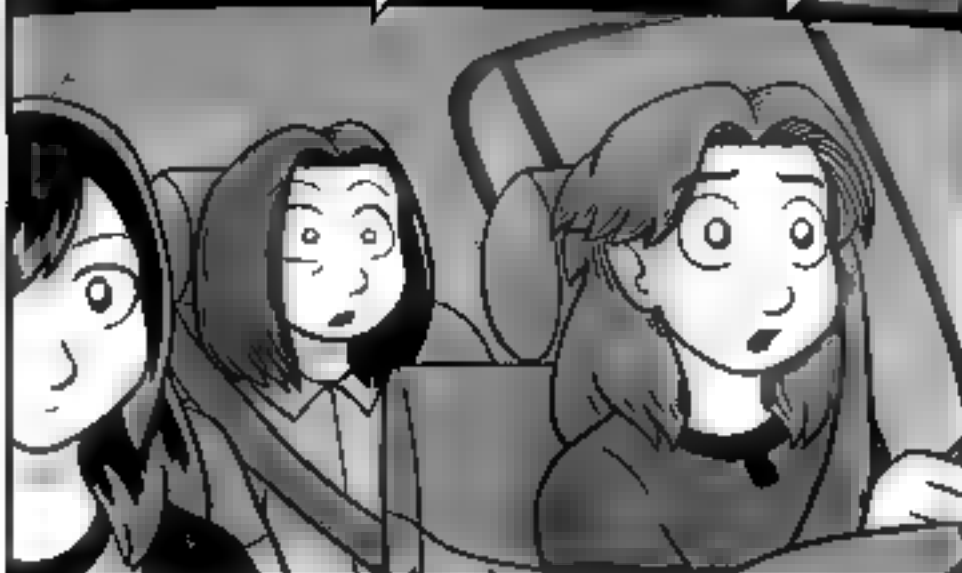
NO! BAD TEDD! THINK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE!



ARGH! NO! WAIT

WHAT ARE WE LISTENING TO?

THE SOUNDTRACK TO PORTAL

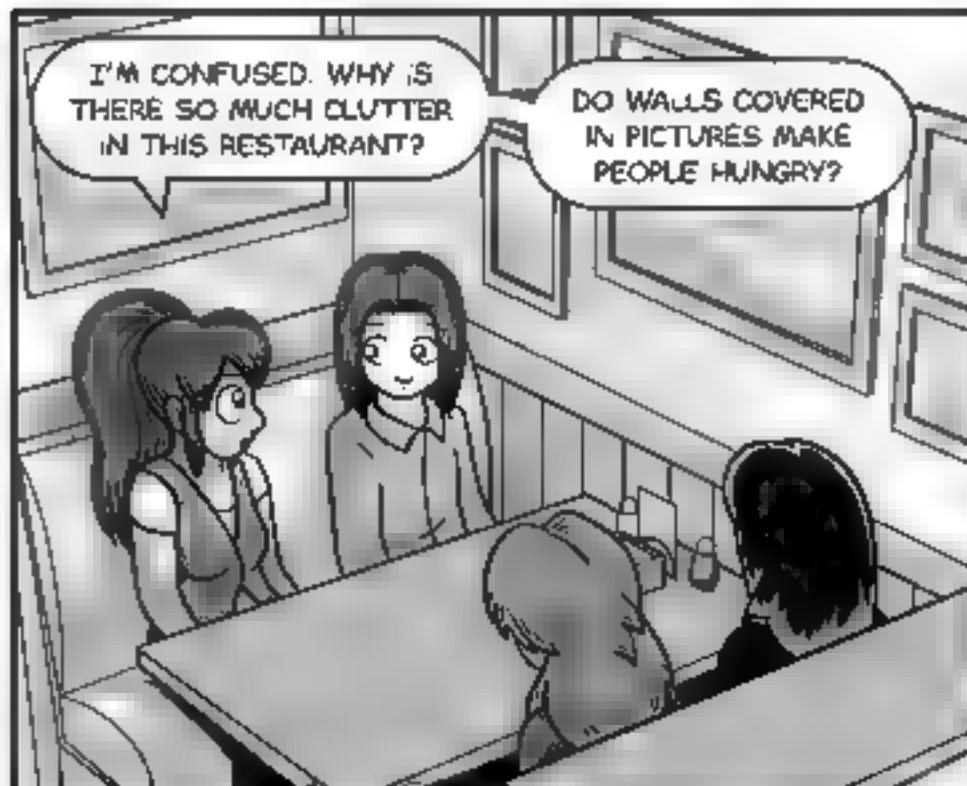


AAAARRRGH!

♪ LOOK AT ME STILL TALKING ♪



♪ WHEN THERE'S SCIENCE TO DO... ♪





I AM SO SORRY ABOUT THAT I DIDN'T KNOW HE WORKED HERE.

NO REASON TO BE SORRY THAT WAS NICE OF YOU



YES. I AM VERY NICE

AND HE SEEMS A LOT NICER THAN GERALD.



WHO'S GERALD?

JUST SOME JERK I USED TO DATE

WHY WOULD YOU DATE A JERK? OR IS THAT A RUDE THING TO ASK



A BIT BUT WHAT THE HELL I USED TO THINK HE WAS COOL BECAUSE HE WOULD STAND UP FOR HIMSELF AND HIS ANDROGYNOUS GOTH OUTFITS.

THEN I REALIZED HE WAS ONLY DRESSING THAT WAY SO PEOPLE WOULD PICK FIGHTS WITH HIM.



GERALD WANTS TO GET INTO FIGHTS?

I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM GET INTO A REAL FIST FIGHT OR ANY THING. BUT YEAH. HE GOES OUT OF HIS WAY TO START TROUBLE



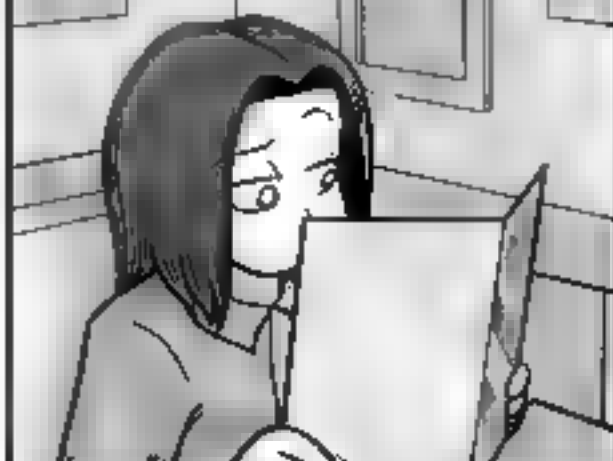
HE SOUNDS LIKE A VENUS FLY TRAP THAT CATCHES BULLIES. THAT'S AWESOME

TEDD. HE INTENTIONALLY ANTAGONIZES PEOPLE TO MAKE HIMSELF FEEL--

CHOMP! BULLY SNACK!
OM NOM NOM NOM!

LET'S SEE..
DOES THIS
PLACE SELL .

YES.
HAMBURGERS
CONFIRMED
READY TO
ORDER.



OKAY... I GUESS I'LL
JUST PRETEND TO KEEP
LOOKING FOR A WHILE



LOOK AT ME
I'M LOOKING!



LOOKING. LOOKING.
CALAMARI. GROSS.
LOOKING.

LOOKING.



STILL LOOKING.

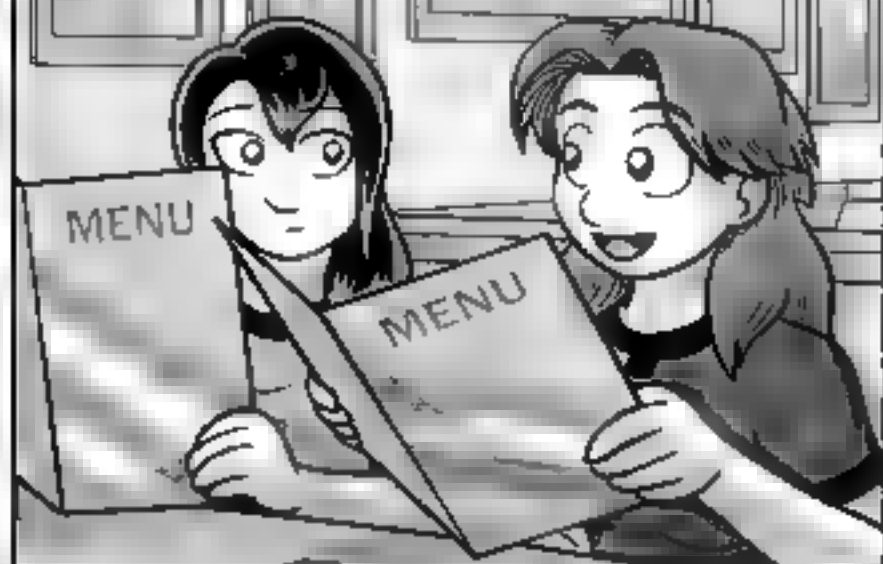
I BET ELLEN'S
DOING THE
SAME THING
AS ME.



WE'LL BOTH
MIRACULOUSLY
KNOW WHAT WE
WANT WHEN GRACE
AND NANASE ARE
READY

I'M THINKING OF TRYING
THE CALAMARI.

WAIT WHAT?



YOU'RE
ORDERING
CALAMARI?

I WAS
THINKING
ABOUT IT
YEAH.

REALLY?

WHY? IS SOME
THING WRONG WITH
CALAMARI?

NO IT'S JUST THAT..
YOU KNOW ELLIOT
WOULD NEVER.

I'M NOT ELLIOT I DON'T ORDER
THE SAME THING EVERY TIME I GO
TO A RESTAURANT I SAW
SOMETHING INTERESTING ON THE
MENU AND I WANT TO TRY IT

IS THAT A
PROBLEM?

PROBLEM? NO PROBLEM! NOT A
PROBLEM AT ALL! *INSPIRING*,
ACTUALLY! WHY I MIGHT TRY
SOME CALAMAR, MYSELF!

YOU KNOW THAT'S
SQUID, RIGHT?

TASTY, TASTY
SQUID.

And thus, TALKERY ENSUED

TRAINING WITH GREG IS NICE BUT HE'S NOT LETTING ME DO ANYTHING "CHANGY" YET WHICH I GUESS MAKES SENSE THE WHOLE POINT IS NOT CLAWING AT PEOPLE



SO WE WERE JUST HANGING OUT WHEN THESE TWO GUYS STARTED HITTING ON US

I'M STILL NOT SURE IF WE DISAPPOINTED THEM OR NOT



...SARAH AND SUSAN HATED IT, BUT I LIKED HOW THE MAIN CHARACTER CHOSE THE POOR BUT NICE GUY OVER THE RICH MEAN GUY



MAYBE WE SHOULD DO THAT NEXT SATURDAY A TRAIN TICKET TO THE CITY IS PRETTY CHEAP

YOU WANT US TO SPEND OUR SATURDAY AT A MUSEUM?

WELL PART OF IT THEY HAVE A T-REX!



CAN YOU RIDE IT?

I AM NOT HORRIBLE AT VOLLEYBALL!

GRACE YOU EITHER DIVE FOR COVER OR LAUNCH THE BALL INTO ORBIT

THAT'S HOW I DEAL WITH MOST OF MY PROBLEMS.



I'VE BEEN SITTING ALONE IN MY BASEMENT AND INADVERTENTLY DISTANCING MYSELF FROM EVERYONE I CARE ABOUT



YOUR SQUID.

AWESOME





OH MY GOD YOU'RE RIGHT! I HAVE AN ENTIRE HARD DRIVE FULL OF UNFINISHED MODS! IT'S JUST LIKE THAT REFRIGERATOR BOX SPACESHIP I NEVER FINISHED!

THEN IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO NEED TO PACE YOURSELF MORE DON'T SPEND ALL YOUR TIME FOCUSED ON SCIENCE

THAT'S EASIER SAID THAN DONE I THOUGHT MY HEAD WAS GOING TO EXPLODE ON THE WAY HERE.

BUT I CAN'T GET SICK OF THIS STUFF! IT'S TOO IMPORTANT!

OH, I DON'T THINK YOU'LL EVER GET SICK OF SCIENCE

"DOES THAT NEW MOVIE SUCK? WILL MY FRIENDS LIKE IT? WHAT HAVE THEY BEEN UP TO? HOW ARE THEY FEELING?"

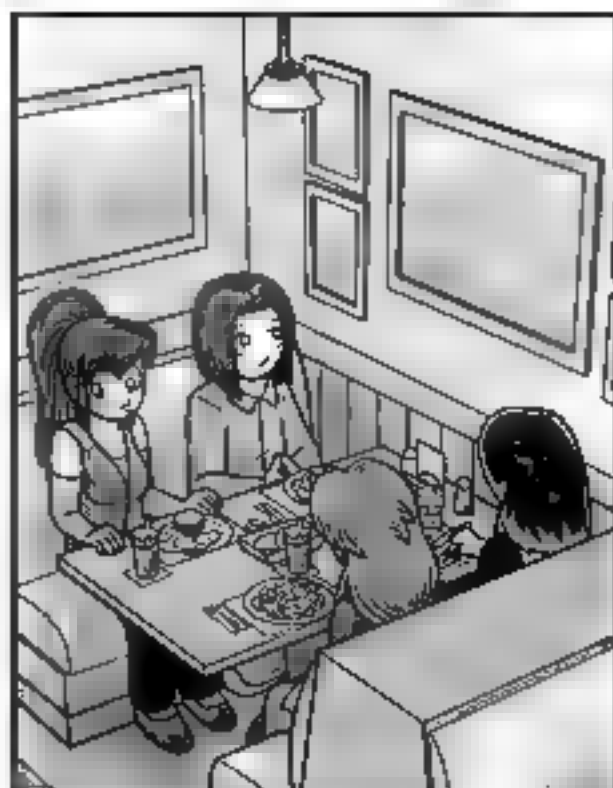
"HOW QUICKLY CAN I UNDO MY GIRLFRIEND'S BRA?"

YOU JUST NEED TO BROADEN YOUR AREAS OF STUDY TO INCLUDE OTHER THINGS AND SPENDING TIME WITH YOUR FRIENDS

I DO OWN A STOPWATCH.

AND FOR TONIGHT'S EXPERIMENT CAN SQUID BE DELICIOUS?

NOM!



Later, at ze bow ng a ey / arcade





OH. DAMN.

AND YET, I STILL HAVE ALL
THOSE MEMORIES OF US
BEING FRIENDS. EXCEPT
THEY'RE ELLIOT'S MEMORIES...

...AND I HAVE SOMEONE
ELSE'S MEMORIES OF BEING
FRIENDS WITH ANOTHER
VERSION OF YOU.

YOU'RE SEXY YOU'RE ALMOST
ENTIRELY RESPONSIBLE FOR MY
EXISTENCE AND YOU HAVE
NOT ONCE APOLOGIZED FOR
ALL THE MISTAKES YOU MADE
THAT LEAD TO MY CREATION!

HOW COULD
I APOLOGIZE
FOR YOU
THINK I'M
SEXY?

YOU COULD
SAY YOU'RE
SORRY FOR
ONE!

NO I MEAN. YEAH I
SCREWED UP A LOT AND
MAYBE I COULD APOLOGIZE
FOR THAT BUT IF I HADN'T,
YOU WOULDN'T EXIST!

I AM NOT SORRY YOU EXIST! IF
YOU'RE THE RESULT OF MY
MISTAKES THEN THEY WERE THE
BEST MISTAKES I EVER MADE!

YOU CONFUSE THE
HELL OUT OF ME.

NOW THAT I'LL
APOLOGIZE FOR.



SO. ARE WE GOOD?

BETTER, MAYBE?



BETTER, DEFINITELY BETTER

YOU'RE STILL CONFUSING.



AND I STILL SAY WE'VE ESSENTIALLY BEEN FRIENDS FOR YEARS. YOU AND ELLIOT WERE ONE PERSON, AND NOW YOU'RE TWO.

THAT'S NOT ACCURATE AND YOU KNOW IT



MAYBE NOT LITERALLY AT LEAST I *THINK* NOT LITERALLY BUT FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES--

--TEDD STOP



ELLIOT AND I AREN'T THE SAME PERSON. I MIGHT BE ENTITLED TO HIS MEMORIES, AND I'LL TAKE THEM FOR WHAT THEY'RE WORTH, BUT I CAN'T PRETEND THEY'RE MINE



I DON'T WANT TO DWELL ON WHAT CAME BEFORE ME I WANT TO FOCUS ON THE NOW AND WHAT'S AHEAD AND MAKE MY *OWN* HISTORY



AND DO YOU WANT THAT HISTORY TO INCLUDE ME?



YES.



THE WAIT'S ABOUT A HALF HOUR.

GRACE!

WHAT'S
UP?

JUST GO
GLOMP TEDD.



CLOMP

WHAT
THE ?

WE NOTICED YOU TWO
TALKING AND DECIDED
TO CHECK THE WAIT
TIME FOR YOU IS
EVERYTHING ALRIGHT?



EVERYTHING'S...
GOOD YOU WEREN'T
EAVESDROPPING,
WERE YOU?

NO BUT I DID
OVERHEAR YOU SAY
SOMETHING ABOUT
WANTING TO FOCUS
ON WHAT'S AHEAD.



OH. WELL.
YES. THAT'S
TRUE

SO OF COURSE YOU
AREN'T JEALOUS OF ALL
THE MEN I'VE DATED
BECAUSE THEY'RE IN
THE PAST



WELL, YEAH. AND
THEY'RE GUYS.

YES YES. APPLES
AND ORANGES ALL
IN THE PAST

WAIT WHAT?
FRUIT?



WELL WELL
THE EXPERIMENT
CONTINUES.



AND YOU'RE STILL ON
THIS ONE GOOD FOR YOU.



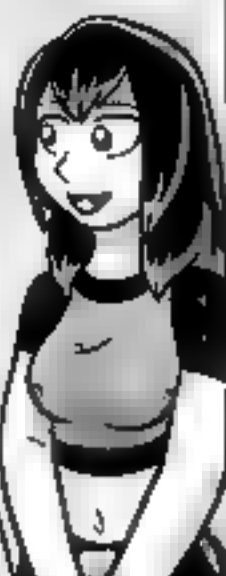
PISS OFF GERALD.
THIS IS THE FIFTY-
SIXTH DAY WE'VE
BEEN TOGETHER.

YOU KNOW HOW
MANY DAYS WE'VE
BEEN TOGETHER?



MAYBE

AW...



FIFTY SIX? HOLY.
DON'T DELUDE YOURSELF,
NANASE! YOU'LL GET BORED
WITH HER LIKE ALL THE



**SHUT THE
HELL UP!**



WE ARE HAVING A GOOD TIME!
DO NOT STOP US NOW!



HOW BIG IS THIS
EXPERIMENT?!



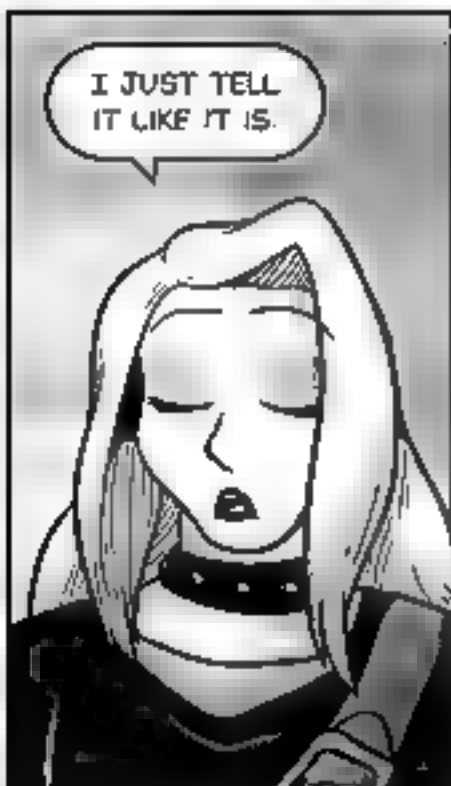
IT'S A DOUBLE-DATE AND WE GET IT!
YOU'RE AN EX-BOYFRIEND BULLY WHO
RESENTS NANASE! MOVE ON!



BULLY?! I AM
NOT A BULLY!



I JUST TELL
IT LIKE IT IS.



TELL IT
SOMEWHERE
ELSE.

OH YEAH? YOU
AND WHAT ARMY IS
GOING TO MAKE



MOVING ON



I CAN'T BELIEVE I USED
TO LOOK UP TO THAT GUY

ARE YOU
OKAY?

OF COURSE.
I'M A BADASS



TEDD

HUGS.



I DIDN'T KNOW YOU
HAD IT IN YOU, TEDD.



YEAH. WELL,
I'M A BADASS
NOW

I DO STUFF LIKE
THAT WHEN PEOPLE ARE
HURTING MY FRIENDS.



THANK
YOU TEDD

YES.
THANK
YOU



BUT SERIOUSLY
NEVER DO THAT
AGAIN.

GERALD WAS TRYING TO
ANTAGONIZE US. YELLING
AT HIM WAS EXACTLY
WHAT HE WANTED



THAT GUY COULD'VE
PUNTED YOU INTO ORBIT

BUT BADASS?



STILL BADASS. JUST BE
A LESS AGGRESSIVE AND
MORE ASSERTIVE BADASS.

HM?

WHAT'S UP?

YOU'RE BETTER THAN
A NEANDERTHAL.

THANKS?

HEY ARE YOU GUYS SURE
THE WAIT'S JUST A HALF
HOUR? THE ALLEY STILL
LOOKS PACKED

WHEN DID GERALD
SAY THAT?

THAT WAS AN ESTIMATE
BUT NANASE'S EX SAID IT
LOOKS WORSE THAN IT IS.

UH NO... SEE IT TURNS OUT
THIS GUY I WENT OUT WITH
NAMED GRANT WORKS HERE.

YOU'RE NOT UPSET THAT WE
RAN INTO ANOTHER ONE OF MY
BOYFRIENDS, ARE YOU?

NO I'M JUST WONDERING IF
YOU HAVE A THING FOR NAMES
THAT START WITH "G"

MINE.

I'M FLATTERED
REALLY BUT.

IT'S A
COINCIDENCE

OH! HEH. IT'S
JUST A--

I NEEDED THIS.



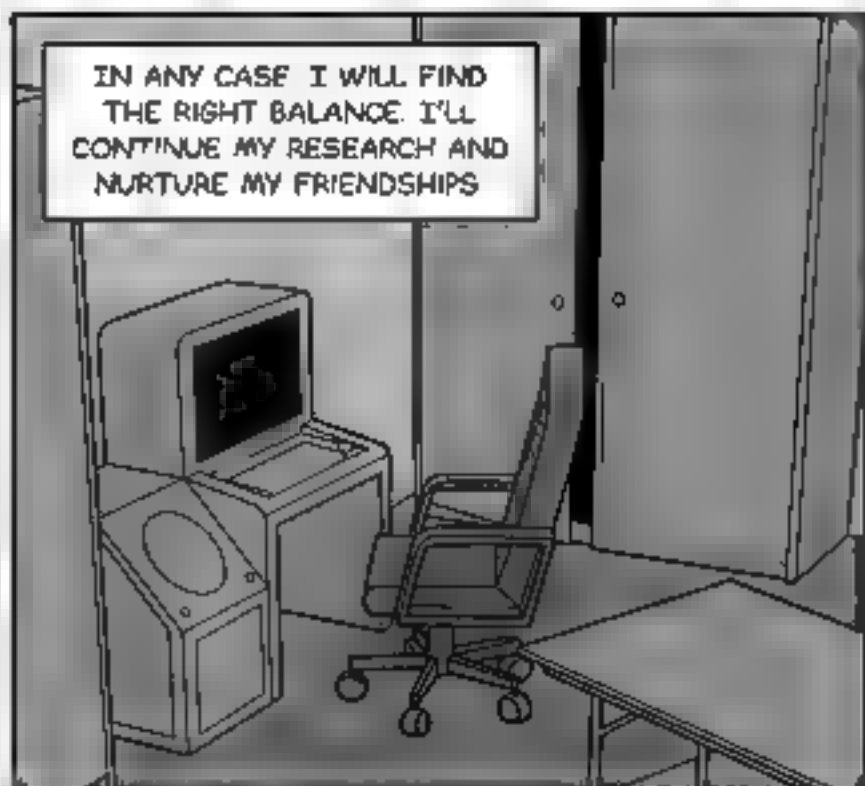
FRIENDSHIPS REQUIRE UPKEEP. HAVING
GOOD INTENTIONS ONLY GOES SO FAR IF
I WIND UP NEGLECTING MY FRIENDS.



OF COURSE IT WASN'T ALL SELFLESS,
WAS IT? SCIENCE IS ADDICTIVE AND FUN.
A LOT OF THAT WAS JUST FOR ME



IN ANY CASE I WILL FIND
THE RIGHT BALANCE. I'LL
CONTINUE MY RESEARCH AND
NURTURE MY FRIENDSHIPS



THEN THE NEXT
TIME SOMEONE
HAS THE BALLS TO
MESS WITH US, WE
WILL STAND
TOGETHER...



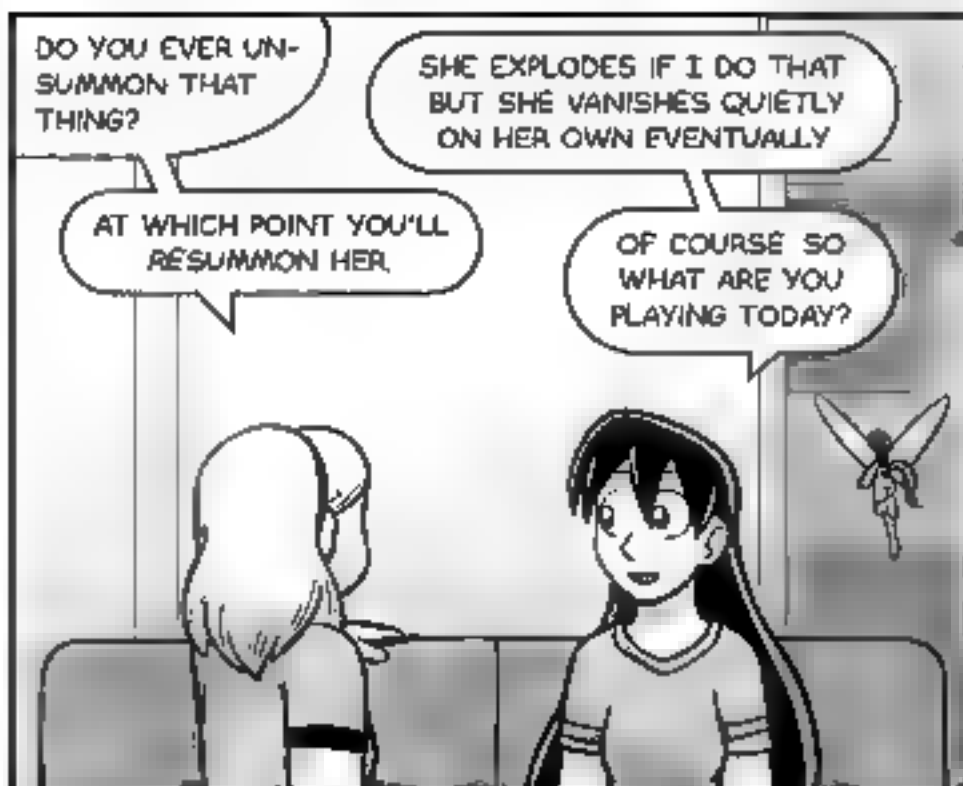
...AND WE WILL
MAKE THEM
REGRET IT



One Way Road - The end



It's pronounced "Na-sey", by the way





PLEASE TELL ME
YOU'RE JUST MESSING
WITH ME.

THEY NEVER SPECIFICALLY SAY
CELIDA TURNS INTO A MAN.
BUT IT WAS PRETTY OBVIOUS
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED.

OBVIOUS? THE MALE
PROTAGONIST LOOKS LIKE HE
HAS BREASTS! ISN'T IT
POSSIBLE THAT CELIDA SIMPLY
BECAME MORE MUSCULAR?

THAT'S... NOT
UNREASONABLE
BUT I STUDY
ANATOMY A LOT
FOR MY ARTWORK.

NINJA CELIDA'S
HIPS, SHOULDERS.
THE RELATIVE
PROPORTIONS.
EVERYTHING
ABOUT THE FORM
SUGGESTS THAT
IT'S MALE

MAYBE YOU JUST THINK A
WOMAN CAN'T BE PHYSICALLY
STRONG WITHOUT TURNING
INTO A MAN.

NANASE GRACE.
ELLEN, AND MY
BOYFRIEND LITERALLY
TURNS INTO A
WOMAN TO BECOME
STRONGER.

YES, YES, I
REALIZED THE
STUPIDITY THE
MOMENT I
SAID IT

..COULDN'T IT HAVE BEEN AN ILLUSION?

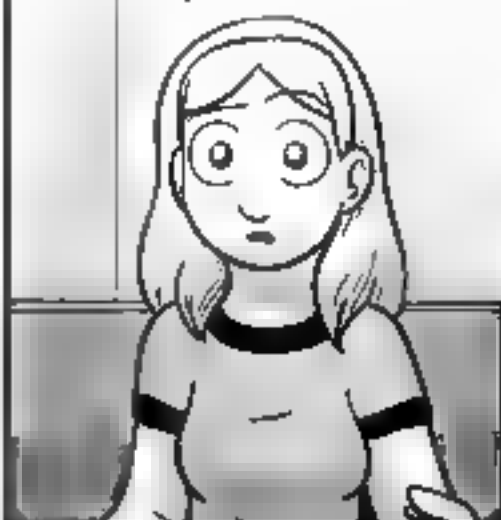


YOU REALLY DON'T WANT CELIDA TO TURN INTO A GUY DO YOU?

I'M ACTUALLY TRYING NOT TO CARE BUT SERIOUSLY WHY COULDN'T IT BE AN ILLUSION? WOULDN'T THAT BE EASIER THAN A TRANSFORMATION?



HUH. YOU KNOW I HAVE NO IDEA HOW DIFFICULT AN ILLUSION LIKE THAT WOULD BE.



BLIT

BLIT



YOU'VE GOT TEDD AND YOU'RE ON SPEAKER. WHAT'S UP, SARAH?



HEY, TEDD WHICH IS EASIER, TRANSFORMATION OR ILLUSIONS?



FOR ME OR IN GENERAL?



I HAVEN'T WORKED WITH ILLUSIONS YET BUT I DO KNOW BASIC. QUICK ILLUSIONS ARE RELATIVELY SIMPLE. PEOPLE WITH MINIMAL MAGIC CAN PULL OFF STUFF LIKE MAKING THEIR HANDS GLOW



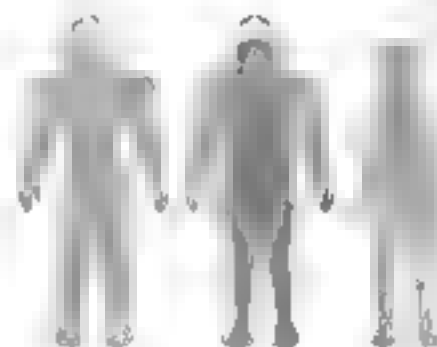
DID YOUR VOICE CHANGE?

IF YOU'RE COMPARING IT TO *TRANSFORMATION*, HOWEVER, AS IN A FULL-FLEDGED *DISGUISE*... THAT ACTUALLY SOUNDS REALLY DIFFICULT

IT WOULD DEPEND HOW IT WORKED AND HOW MUCH IT WAS AUTOMATED. IN ANY CASE I'D EXPECT A *HEFTY* ENERGY UPKEEP



IF YOU WERE *MANIPULATING LIGHT* TO CREATE THE ILLUSION. ANY PART OF YOU THAT WASN'T OVERLAPPED BY THE ILLUSION WOULD HAVE TO BE RENDERED INVISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE. IF YOU CAN DO THAT WHY NOT BE ENTIRELY INVISIBLE?



OF COURSE. A *PSYCHIC* ILLUSION WOULD LIKELY OPERATE ON *BENDING* THE TRUTH YOU COULDN'T SIMPLY MAKE ONE'S FORM VANISH, AS THEIR MIND WOULD MORE EASILY REJECT THAT. *OR COULD YOU?* IN ANY CASE, MIRRORS AND VIDEO WOULD SEE THROUGH THAT SORT OF THING BUT IF YOU COULD POSSIBLY *COMBINE* THOSE METHODS.



A-ACTUALLY, SUSAN AND I WERE JUST WONDERING ABOUT CEL'DA'S NINJA FORM, AND WE'RE TRYING TO FIGURE OUT IF SHE ACTUALLY TRANSFORMS.



OH THEY ANSWERED THAT IN THE MANGA. SHE TURNS INTO A GUY NO QUESTION.



OH.

YEP ANYTHING ELSE?

UH. NO. THANKS.

NO PROBLEM



SO TEDD SAID A BUNCH OF WORDS FOLLOWED BY "CELIDA TURNS INTO A GUY IN THE MANGA."

ALSO I THINK TEDD TURNED INTO A GIRL AFTER SAYING HELLO.

OH

NOT SURPRISING.

YOU KNOW WHAT THOUGH? IT DOESN'T MATTER.

BECAUSE THE MANGA DOESN'T COUNT?

NO WELL, MAYBE, BUT MOSTLY BECAUSE THE GAME LEFT IT OPEN TO INTERPRETATION.

ALL THE GAME WAS CLEAR ON WAS THAT CELIDA HAD SOME SORT OF VERY GOOD DISGUISE.

THE EXACT NATURE OF THAT DISGUISE AND HOW IT WORKED DIDN'T MATTER TO THE PLOT SO THEY NEVER BOTHERED TO EXPLAIN IT

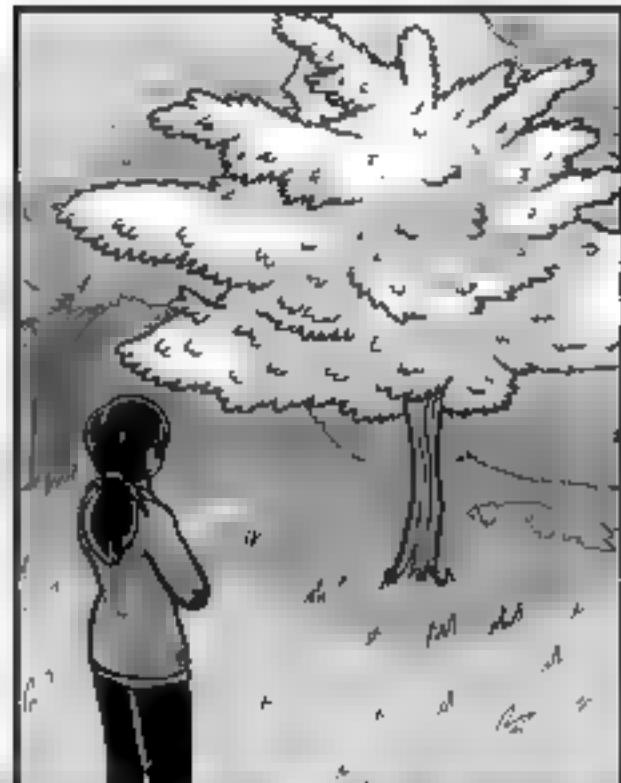
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT THE MANGA OR EVEN THE CREATORS SAY

THEY LEFT IT OPEN TO INTERPRETATION IN THE STORY ITSELF SO THAT'S WHAT IT IS. THERE IS NO WRONG ANSWER

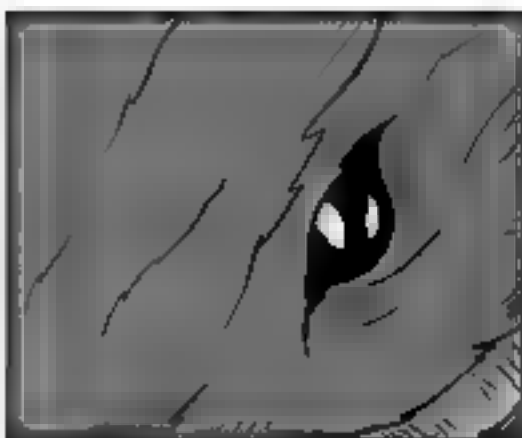
I AGREE IT'S LIKE HOW I REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE *STAR TREK THE NEXT GENERATION* MOVIES AS BEING IN THE SAME UNIVERSE AS THE SHOW I AM ALLOWED THAT PERSONAL INTERPRETATION.

RIGHT!

BUT SERIOUSLY THOSE MOVIES CAN'T TAKE PLACE IN THE SAME UNIVERSE. SCOTTY ASKED ABOUT ADMIRAL KIRK IN THE EPISODE "RELIQS" WHEN GENERATIONS WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE HE WITNESSED KIRK'S SUPPOSED DEMISE AND THEN THERE'S ALL THE INCONSISTENCIES WITH PICARD'S CHARACTER, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH BEING HOW HE REACTS TO THE BORG AND HOW









SQUEEEEE!

HELLLLP!

FWEEEEEEEEEEEEEEET!

**GET AWAY FROM HER,
YOU JACKASS!**

FLASH

FWEEEEEEEEEEEEET!

FLASH

FLASH

FWEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEET!

FLASH

FLASH

FLASH

FLASH

FWEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEET!

D-DID IT WORK?
DID IT LEAVE?

BOO-YAH!

IN YOUR FACE,
MEGA PIG!

DAMN THIS HILL IS STEEP
HEY, ARE YOU OKAY?

UM, YES. I
BELIEVE SO.
THANKS TO
YOU.

NO PROBLEM. I'M JUST
GLAD THAT WORKED! MY
OTHER PLAN WAS TO
THROW A SHOE AT IT

YOU UH. YOU
JUST PLANNING TO
STAY UP THERE?

I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW I COULD CLIMB A
TREE A MINUTE AGO I'M NOT SURE
HOW TO GET DOWN.

WOW THAT'S
SOME KICK ASS
TREE CLIMBING FOR
A FIRST TIME

DON'T
WORRY I'LL
HELP



OKAY JUST GRADUALLY
MAKE YOUR WAY TO THE
NEXT LOWEST BRANCH.



EEK!

OH CRAP
HANG--

T
H
W
U
M
P



I'M SORRY! ARE
YOU OKAY?!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT
IT ARE YOU OKAY?



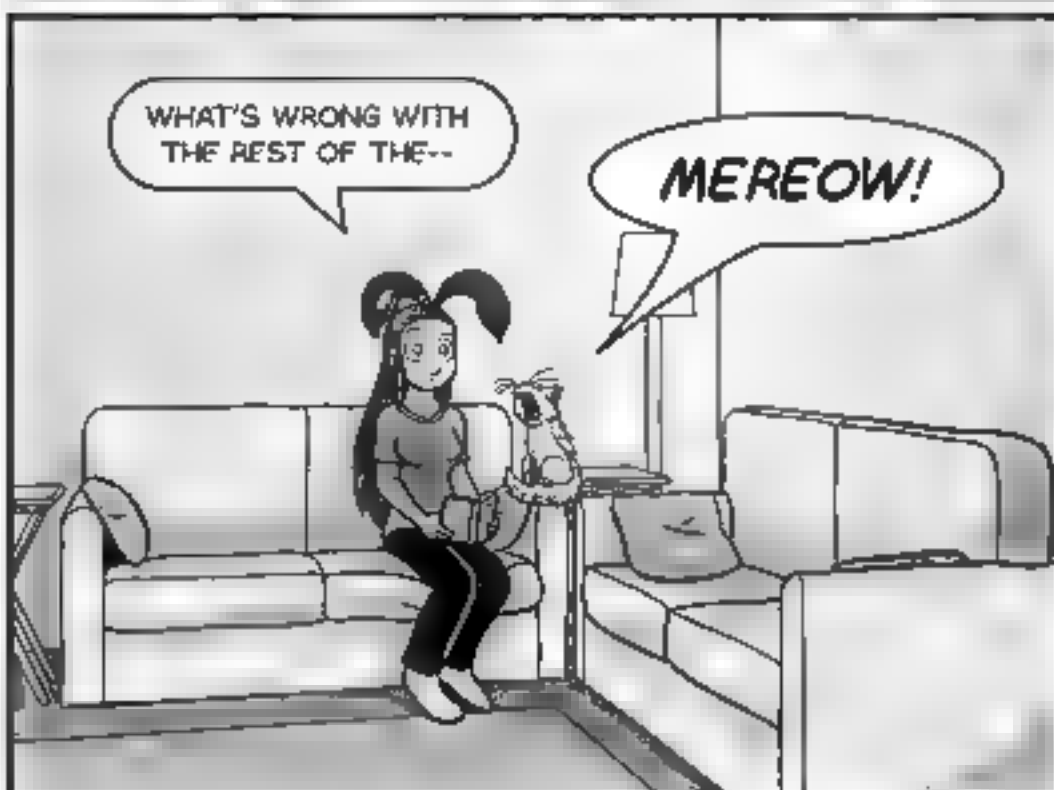
YEAH UH.

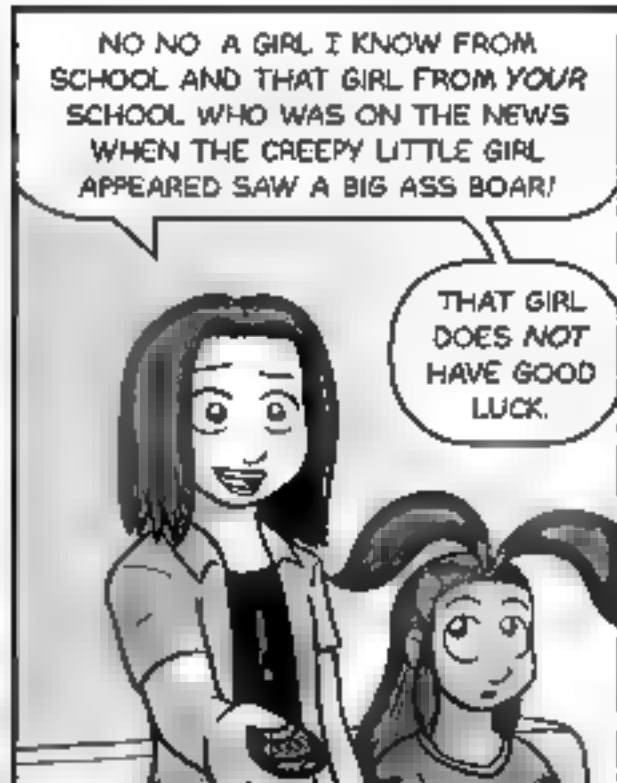


W: WE SHOULD PROBABLY
TELL SOMEONE ABOUT
THE GIANT BOAR.

PROBABLY

Later that day.





I'M STANDING OUTSIDE OF THE VISITOR CENTER FOR THE MOPERVILLE FOREST PRESERVE WHERE TWO YOUNG LADIES, CATALINA AND RHODA, WITNESSED A LARGE FERAL HOG ALONG A FOREST PATH.



I WAS TAKING A PHOTO OF I THINK A CHERRY TREE WHEN I SAW SOME GROUND THAT WAS DUG UP THE NEXT THING I KNEW, A BOAR WAS CHASING ME



I WAS WALKING A HIGHER PATH WHEN *SQUEE!* I HEAR A PIG SQUEAL. I RAN TO SEE WHAT WAS UP AND THIS BIG OL' PIG HAD THIS POOR GIRL UP A TREE!



IT WAS SO BIG. TALLER THAN ME IT DIDN'T LOOK... *THAT* BIG FROM A DISTANCE. BUT ONCE UP CLOSE...

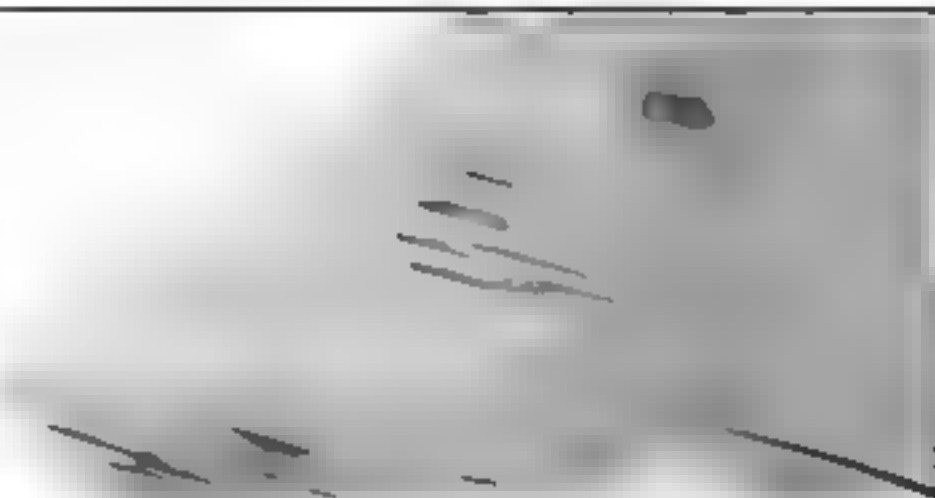


I'M NOT SURE WHY IT STOPPED CHARGING LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO GET UP THE TREE

SO I WHIPPED OUT MY "HANDS OFF JACKA" ER "JACK" WHISTLE. STARTED WHISTLING UP A STORM AND FLASHING PHOTOS WITH MY CAMERA. SHE HAD A CAMERA, TOO AND WE MANAGED TO FREAK IT THE HELL-HECK OUT SO IT RAN AWAY



"THE PHOTOS TAKEN WERE MORE TO SCARE THE FERAL HOG THAN TO DOCUMENT IT AND IT'S DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE THE ACTUAL SIZE OF THE HOG FROM THE PHOTOS"



"THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE OF WHETHER THERE IS A HOG IN THE AREA, HOWEVER, IS FAR LESS BLURRY"

AS MUCH AS I'D RATHER CALL THESE FINE YOUNG WOMEN DIRTY STINKY LARS WHO SMELL, THAT DUG UP GROUND WAS THE RESULT OF A HOG ROOTING FOR FOOD. IT'S GOT *HOG PRINTS* RIGHT IN IT



THAT'S RIGHT *BUT* JUST GOT REAL

SIMPSON

NOW DON'T GET ME WRONG. THE EVIDENCE WE FOUND SUGGESTS A BIG HOG BUT NOT *THAT* BIG. NO WAY IT'S TALLER THAN A FOUR FOOT GIRL.

I'M ACTUALLY FIVE FEET

NOT THAT I'M CALLING THEM *SMELLY LIARS*. I WAS ONCE CHASED BY AN ANGRY CHIHUAHUA NO BIGGER THAN MY FOOT, BUT I WOULD'VE SWORN AT THE TIME IT WAS BIGGER'N A GREAT DANE

IT REALLY IS THAT BIG IN MY NIGHTMARES.

'SIDES WHICH, HOW BIG IT IS AIN'T THE BIG PICTURE THOUGH THEY DO GET BIG. THIS IS THE FIRST FERAL HOG SIGHTING IN THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY AND THAT'S BAD NEWS.

THESE FERAL HOGS ARE AN INVASIVE SPECIES DESCENDED FROM EUROPEAN BOARS BROUGHT OVER BY SPANISH SETTLERS IN 1539.

THEY'RE DESTRUCTIVE TO THE ECOSYSTEM, SPREAD DISEASE, CONTAMINATE WATER SOURCES. REPRODUCE AT AN ALARMING RATE AND HAVE NO NATURAL PREDATORS.

I DON'T KNOW HOW A FERAL HOG WOUND UP THIS FAR NORTH, BUT WE CAN WORRY ABOUT THAT LATER. FERAL HOGS CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO GAIN A FOOTHOLD IN THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY

THAT FERAL HOG AND ANY OTHER AROUND HERE MUST BE DESTROYED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

DO YOU BELIEVE
THERE ARE OTHER
HOGS IN THE AREA?



I HAVE NO IDEA. BUT *THIS* BOAR HAS A
STYLISH SCAR ON ITS LEFT CHEEK. IF
ANYONE SEES A BOAR *WITHOUT* A SCAR,
WE'LL KNOW THERE'S MORE THAN ONE.

"UNFORTUNATELY THE DEAL HOG HUNTING
METHOD USES TRAINED DOGS TO TRACK THE
HOGS AND HOLD THEM DOWN BY THEIR EARS SO
THE HUNTERS CAN CATCH UP AND DO THEIR
THING. WE DON'T HAVE ANY DOGS WITH THE
RIGHT TRAINING OR GEAR FOR THAT"



FORTUNATELY I'VE GOT BUDDIES WHO HUNT
THESE THINGS FOR A LIVING IN TEXAS. AND
THEY CAN BE UP HERE WITH THEIR DOGS
AS EARLY AS TUESDAY EVENING.

BUT THAT BOAR'S
WAY TOO BIG FOR -

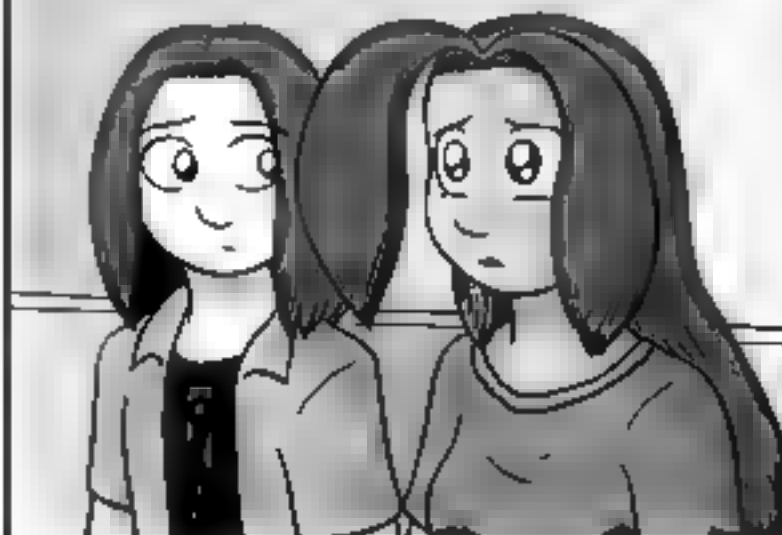


THE MOPERVILLE FOREST PRESERVE IS NOW
CLOSED TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC WITH ONLY
HUNTERS ALLOWED IN. THEY ARE *ONLY*
PERMITTED TO HUNT FERAL HOGS AND MUST
REPORT ANY AND ALL KILLS.

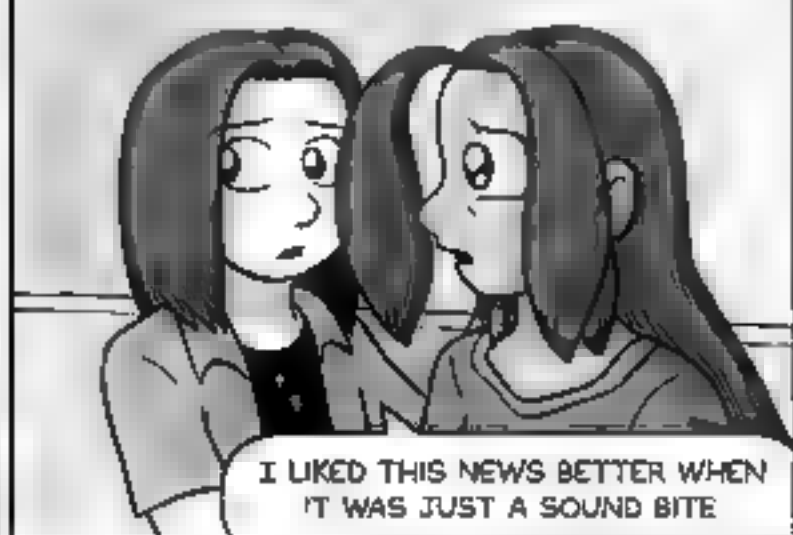
I'M CAROL
BROWN.



THANKS, CAROL! UP NEXT A HEART-
WARMING STORY ABOUT PUPPIES.



SO THEY'RE GOING TO KILL THE BOAR.
AND IF IT'S AS BIG AS RHODA SAYS, THOSE
DOGS AND SOME HUNTERS COULD DIE, TOO?



I LIKED THIS NEWS BETTER WHEN
IT WAS JUST A SOUND BITE

Later that evening

I GUESS THEY HAVE TO DO SOMETHING, BUT IF IT IS JUST ONE PIG DO THEY REALLY HAVE TO KILL IT?

SHOULDN'T THAT BE A LAST RESORT?



AND THOSE POOR DOGS... I HOPE RHODA IS MISTAKEN..



MAYBE THEY'RE MAGIC DOGS AND CAN WIN EITHER WAY!



THAT SOUNDS STUPID BUT THEN I'M A SQUIRREL-HUMAN-ALIEN-ALIEN HYBRID. SO

BZZZ BZZZ

HM?



HELLO?

HELLO
EDWARD



...?!

I WISH TO OFFER
MY ASSISTANCE IN
SAVING THE BOAR



RAVEN?!



RAVEN?

YOU KNOW OF WHAT I
SPEAK DON'T YOU?

I.. ALMOST DIDN'T CALL, BUT
WITH MY TALENT FOR DIS-
ENCHANTMENT I CAN MAKE IT
MUCH EASIER TO SAFELY RETURN
THE BOAR TO NORMAL SIZE SO
THAT IT MAY BE TAKEN ALIVE

YES. I KNOW ABOUT
THE BOAR. BUT.. AFTER
ALL THESE YEARS.

THAT'S... ALTRUISTIC OF
YOU BUT NONE OF THIS
IS MY CALL ANYMORE
ARTHUR IS IN CHARGE

I HAVE NO INTENTION
OF SPEAKING WITH THE
MAN WHO TRIED TO
DEPORT ME TO RUSSIA.

THE ONLY THING I LIED
ABOUT WAS MY AGE, AND
I'M NOT FROM RUSSIA.

TO BE FAIR, YOU DID
ENTER THE COUNTRY USING
FALSIFIED INFORMATION

REGARDLESS, EVEN IF
PARANORMAL AGENTS
WERE GETTING INVOLVED
WHICH I DOUBT--

ARTHUR'S TAKEN TO A VERY
LAISSEZ-FAIRE APPROACH TO
PARANORMAL INVESTIGATION,
AND THERE'S LITTLE EVIDENCE
OF PARANORMAL INVOLVEMENT

AND EVEN IF
IT WAS IT'S A
FERAL HOG THAT
TRIED TO HARM A
TEENAGE GIRL

YOU DON'T THINK
THEY'RE EVEN LOOKING
INTO THIS?

BUT EVERY
THING THE
GIRLS SAID

WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH
TO CONVINCE ARTHUR

NOBODY'S GOAL IS TO
TAKE THIS THING ALIVE

I SUPPOSE I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED BUT THIS ISN'T JUST ABOUT THE FATE OF A CONFUSED ANIMAL. NOBODY SEEMS TO CARE ABOUT

HEY I CAN FEEL SORRY FOR IT BUT

THE HUNTERS AND THEIR HOUNDS. I'M SURE WORD OF A BIG BOAR WILL ATTRACT SOME *TROPHY SEEKING JACKASSES* I WOULDN'T MISS, BUT FOR THE MOST PART I'D RATHER SOMETHING BE DONE *BEFORE THIS BOAR KILLS ANYONE*

...I CAN CONTACT ARTHUR AND APPEAL TO THAT REASONING. BUT I STILL DOUBT HE WILL ACT QUICKLY, IF AT ALL

THEN I WILL SAVE THE BOAR MYSELF

HOW? EVEN WITH YOUR TALENTS, YOU STILL HAVE TO GET UP CLOSE TO DISENCHANT ANYTHING. AND SUCCEEDING AT THAT YOU'D STILL HAVE A BIG ANGRY HOG ON YOUR HANDS.

SO HELP ME! YOU *MUST* KNOW SOMEONE WHO HAS A CALMING AFFECT ON ANIMALS. OR CAN COMMUNICATE WITH THEM, OR... *SOMETHING!*

YOU WANT ME TO PUT SOMEONE AT RISK BY MAKING THEM AN INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN YOU AND A GIANT BOAR.

IDEALLY SOMEONE WITH A RANGED TRANQUILITY SPELL POWERFUL ENOUGH TO AFFECT A RECENTLY ENCHANTED BOAR BUT I CAN PROTECT THEM!

RAVEN. THERE IS *NO PLACE* FOR THIS BOAR. IF IT'S TAKEN ALIVE IT WILL *NOT* BE RELOCATED. IT WILL BE *SLAUGHTERED*.

I WILL FIND A PLACE FOR IT

NO YOU WON'T, AND WHAT'S MORE IT WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE TO DO SO THESE ANIMALS ARE DANGEROUS AND AN ECOLOGICAL DISASTER

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO HELP YOU SHOULD KILL THE BOAR YOURSELF IN AS PAINLESS AND HUMANE A WAY AS POSSIBLE.



THAT'S COLD
VÉRRES.



COLD OR NOT
THAT IS THE REALITY
OF THE SITUATION.

I WOULD THINK YOU
OF ALL PEOPLE WOULD
APPRECIATE THAT



... THIS IS TRULY WHAT YOU
BELIEVE? THIS HAS NOTHING
TO DO WITH HOW WE LEFT
THINGS?

OUR HISTORY DOES
NOT OUTWEIGH THE
GREATER GOOD.



I'M SORRY I
WASN'T A BETTER
TEACHER.



GOODBYE
RAVEN.



DON'T YOU
WORRY MR.
RAVEN..



WE'RE
GOING TO SAVE
EVERYONE

Monday morning, before classes



Later that morning

BRIING!

BEFORE YOU GO ALLOW
ME TO REMIND YOU
THAT THERE WILL ONCE
AGAIN BE THE WEEKLY
COMPREHENSION QUIZ,
AGAIN, ON FRIDAY

SERIOUSLY, I'M TIRED OF HEARING
THE "I DIDN'T KNOW" EXCUSE .. HM?

WHAT IS THIS?

I know you're half-
immortal and want to
save the boar. I can
talk to animals and
I can totally help! ☺

If this sounds good,
call me later My number

Grace S.
History
2nd Period

GRACE!





YOU . WHAT?
YOU.. LIVE WITH
MR. VERRES?

HE TOOK ME IN A
FEW MONTHS AGO
NOW ABOUT THIS
BOAR SITUATION.



AND MY
BEING HALF
IMMORTAL?

YOUR BARRIERS KEPT AT
LEAST ONE PERSON IN THE
HALLWAYS. I WAS ALSO TOLD
ABOUT YOU BY A FRIENDLY
IMMORTAL NAMED JERRY BUT
HE'S SORT OF DEAD BY NOW



AN IMMORTAL NAMED..
YOU SHOULD NOT BE
THIS FORTHCOMING

WHY NOT? IT'S
NOT LIKE I GAVE
THE SCHOOL A
FAKE ADDRESS.



I WAS REFERRING
TO MATTERS SUCH AS
BEING PART ALIEN.

OH. LIKE YOU
DIDN'T ALREADY
KNOW *SOMETHING*
WAS UP WITH ME

WHAT?



"THIS GIRL IS A LIAR!
SHE COULDN'T POSSIBLY
HAVE READ ALL OF THAT
SO QUICKLY! BLARGH!"



OOOO-EEE-OOOO. !
"OH. WAIT THESE GIRLS
ARE AWESOME! I MUST
TEACH THEM!"



THAT IS
NOT HOW
IT WENT

AND THEN I LIKE
TO PRETEND YOU
BOUGHT US APOLOGY
ICE CREAM. BUT YOU
TOTALLY DIDN'T

ENOUGH! REGARDLESS OF THE BOAR, WE NOW HAVE MUCH TO DISCUSS. BUT NOT HERE WE CAN DELVE INTO THE DEPTHS OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE AT MY HOME AFTER SCHOOL.



REGARDLESS? YOU WANT TO SAVE IT RIGHT? AND THE DOGS AND THE --



YES, YES. BUT I'M NOT DRAGGING A MINOR INTO THE WOODS WITH ME TO TRACK DOWN A GIANT WILD ANIMAL!

I'M EIGHTEEN! I'M A MAJOR!



AS THOUGH THAT MAKES YOU AN ADULT

LEGALLY, IT DOES. YOU CAN DO ALL SORTS OF STUFF WITH ME!



YOU SHOULDN'T SAY IT LIKE LOOK THIS IS MY ADDRESS. TELL NO ONE AND COME ALONE AFTER SCHOOL.

THAT'S GOING TO BE DIFFICULT I DON'T HAVE A CAR OF MY OWN.



MY HOME IS A FIFTEEN MINUTE WALK FROM THE VERRE'S HOUSEHOLD IF YOU CANNOT MAKE THAT ON FOOT THEN YOU HAVE NO BUSINESS ASKING TO JOIN ME ON A GIANT BOAR HUNT



AND IN THE MEAN-TIME BE MORE CAREFUL WITH SENSITIVE INFORMATION!

DID YOU KNOW YOU DROPPED MY NOTE TO YOU ON THE FLOOR?

YES.



LATER STILL that morning...



OKAY! HE KNOWS THAT I KNOW BUT I HAVEN'T SAID ANYTHING TO SUGGEST THAT ANYONE ELSE KNOWS. AND HE SHOULDN'T KNOW THAT YOU KNOW THAT HE SORTA KNOWS ABOUT YOU!



OKAY SO WHY ALL THE KNOWING?



DON'T TELL ANYONE. BUT WE BOTH WANT TO SAVE THE BOAR AND KEEP IT FROM HURTING ANYONE AND HE SORTA KNEW ABOUT ME ANYWAY FROM THAT OOH-EE OOH DEALIE SO

YOU WANT TO SAVE THAT BIG HORRIBLE ANIMAL THAT TRIED TO EAT RHODA?

I DON'T THINK IT WAS TRYING TO EAT HER.



SOUNDS NUTS AND STUPID. NEED ANY HELP?

UM. THE TWO OF US SHOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT AND I'M HAVING A HARD TIME JUST CONVINCING HIM TO LET ME GO WITH HIM. YOU'D REALLY HELP?



SURE. I DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THEM MAKING PORK OUT OF THAT BOAR. BUT I CARE ABOUT YOU AND RAVEN DID TAKE ON A WIZARD FOR ME. MOSTLY FOR YOU, THOUGH

AW.



JUST DON'T TELL ANYONE. OKAY? I DON'T WANT THEM TO WORRY OR TRY TO STOP ME AND I THINK IT'D BE SAFEST WITH JUST ME AND RAVEN

HOW DO YOU FIGURE?

I CAN FLY AND HE'S A MAGIC MAN

AH.





NOAH. YOU'RE PLAYING BASKETBALL WITH YOUR FRIEND ELLIOT THIS AFTERNOON. YES?

INDEED! HE IS GETTING BETTER, TOO.



CALL BEFORE RETURNING HOME YOUR CLASSMATE GRACE IS GOING TO BE HERE AND IT'S BEST SHE DOESN'T

THWUMP



WHAT HAPPENED?

NOTHING! I TRIPPED!

HOW?



WHY IS SHE COMING HERE?

IT'S COMPLICATED BUT SHE KNOWS ABOUT MY... HERITAGE SHE DOES NOT NEED TO BE GIVEN REASON TO SUSPECT YOURS.



THERE IS... SOMETHING I HAVE NOT TOLD YOU.

SOMETHING RELEVANT?



YES. GRACE WAS THE FURRY SEYUNOLU FROM A FEW WEEKS AGO AT THE MARTIAL ARTS DOJO.

THAT WAS... SO SHE ALREADY HAS SOME EXPERIENCE DID YOU JUST RECENTLY REALIZE THIS?

NO I KNEW THEN.

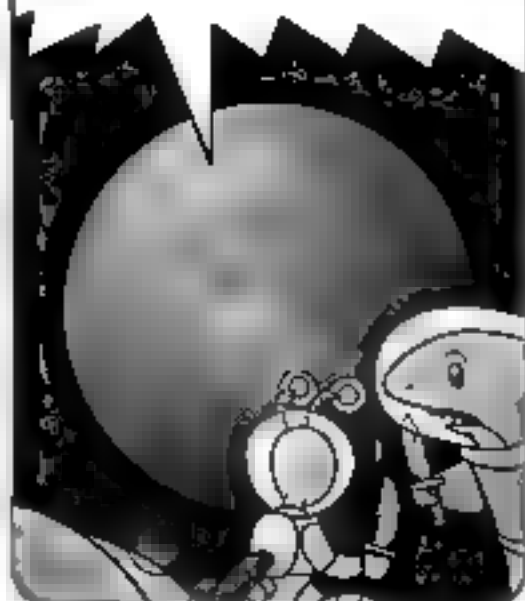
THEN WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?



BECAUSE I AM ALSO FAIRLY CERTAIN SHE IS THE ONE WHO KILLED DAMIEN.



WHAT?!



SHE CAN'T POSSIBLY BE THE ONE WHO SLEW DAMIEN! WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A GIRL WHO RAN OUT OF MY CLASSROOM CRYING UPON LEARNING THE HISTORY OF WORLD WAR II!

WORLD WAR II WAS KIND OF A BUMMER..

ALL THEY TOLD US WAS THAT A PART-SQUIRREL SEYUNOLU WHO WAS A WOMAN OF GRACE DEFEATED DAMIEN.

SHORTLY AFTER THAT A FURRY SEYUNOLU NAMED GRACE, WHOSE LAST NAME IS THE SCIENTIFIC NAME FOR THE SQUIRREL FAMILY, STARTED ATTENDING OUR SCHOOL.

I THOUGHT THAT LAST NAME SOUNDED FISHY

NO. SQUIRRELLY

THAT'S NOT YOU KEEP REFERRING TO HER AS A "FURRY" SEYUNOLU IS SHE OR IS SHE NOT PART SQUIRREL?

I BELIEVE SO NOT DOMINANTLY HOWEVER. THE FORM I SAW HER IN HAD THREE TAILS THAT LOOKED SQUIRRELLY, BUT BEYOND THAT..

SO YOU'RE NOT CERTAIN.

I AM SO CERTAIN! HER HERO ALIAS WAS EVEN "SHADE TAIL"

HOW IS THAT SIGNIFICANT?

THE WORD "SQUIRREL" HAS ORIGINS IN ANCIENT GREEK. THE GREEK WORD WOULD ROUGHLY TRANSLATE TO "SHADE TAIL"

SEE? I CAN BUST OUT ANCIENT GREEK ETYMOLOGY TOO!

APPARENTLY SO BUT WHY DO YOU KNOW THAT?

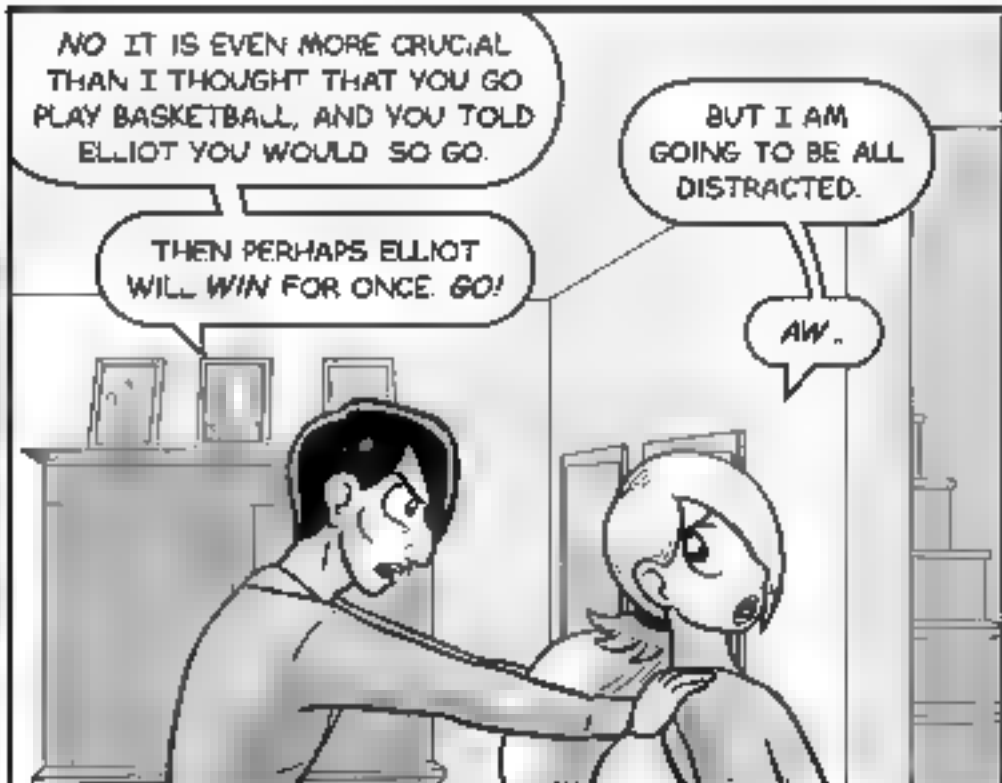
ONE OF MY TWO ONLY CLUES REGARDING WHO KILLED DAMIEN WAS SQUIRREL-RELATED. I HAVE COME TO KNOW MUCH ABOUT SQUIRRELS.

WERE YOU AWARE THAT THEY EAT NUTS?



SO... IT COULD
BE TRUE..

PERHAPS I SHOULD STAY AND
HELP DETERMINE IF IT IS? I COULD
ASK LEADING QUESTIONS, PROVIDE
HUGS AND BACKRUBS AND--



NO IT IS EVEN MORE CRUCIAL
THAN I THOUGHT THAT YOU GO
PLAY BASKETBALL, AND YOU TOLD
ELLIOT YOU WOULD SO GO.

THEN PERHAPS ELLIOT
WILL WIN FOR ONCE. GO!

BUT I AM
GOING TO BE ALL
DISTRACTED.

AW..



IF IT IS TRUE IF SHE IS INDEED
THE ONE WHO DEFEATED DAMIEN.
THAT COULD CHANGE EVERYTHING.



AND NOT JUST WITH THE
BOAR! WITH BOTH HER AND
NOAH AT MY SIDE WE COULD
ACCOMPLISH SO MUCH! WE..



MUST TAKE CARE
TO NOT REPEAT
PAST MISTAKES...

Less than fifteen minutes ater

GRACE COME IN.

MR. RAVEN?
YOU LOOK SO

QUICKLY

THIS IS MY TRUE FORM.
I SUPPOSE YOU DID NOT
GET A GOOD LOOK AT ME
THROUGH THOSE BARRIERS.

THAT I
DID NOT

I HAVE DECIDED I AM WILING TO
CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY THAT
YOUR HELPING ME WITH THE BOAR
COULD POSSIBLY BE A GOOD IDEA.

REALLY?!

YES, BUT I NEED TO KNOW
THAT YOU CAN HANDLE THE
SITUATION AND ARE EVERY-
THING YOU SAY YOU ARE

OH, I'M
TOTALLY PART
ALIEN! SEE?

HUH ON THE FOREHEAD... THAT IS EVIDENCE THAT
YOU ARE A PART URYUOM SEYUNOLU BUT ONLY
SIGH FURRY SEYUNOLUS HAVE THE NATURAL
TALENT FOR COMMUNICATING
WITH ANIMALS.

OH! YEAH.
NO PROBLEM!

YES LET'S GET A
LOOK AT THIS DEADLY
THREE TAILED

TA-DA!

WHAT

YOU'RE SMALLER.
I DIDN'T THINK
YOU'D BE SMALLER

YEAH. I'M ALWAYS
CHANGING SIZES. IT'S
WHY I LIKE ELASTIC
WAISTBANDS.



WHAT SORT OF
ANIMAL ARE YOU
SUPPOSED TO BE?



I'M PART SQUIRREL!
CAN'T YOU TELL?

YOU HAVE A BUSHY TAIL.
BUT YOUR FACE HAS BARELY
CHANGED. IT'S JUST FUZZIER.
AND YOUR TEETH DON'T LOOK
AT ALL LIKE A SQUIRREL'S.

ARE YOU
CERTAIN
YOU'RE PART
SQUIRREL?



YES! I'M TOTALLY
SQUIRRELLY! DOES IT
MATTER?



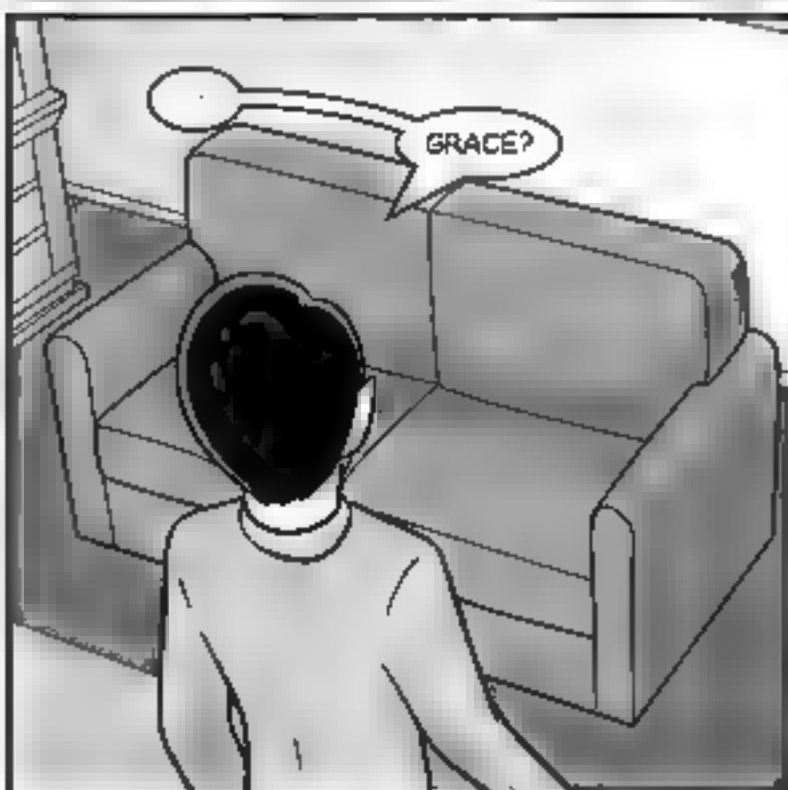
YES.

THEN I'LL PROVE IT!



WHAT
ARE YOU

GRACE?



SQUEAK!

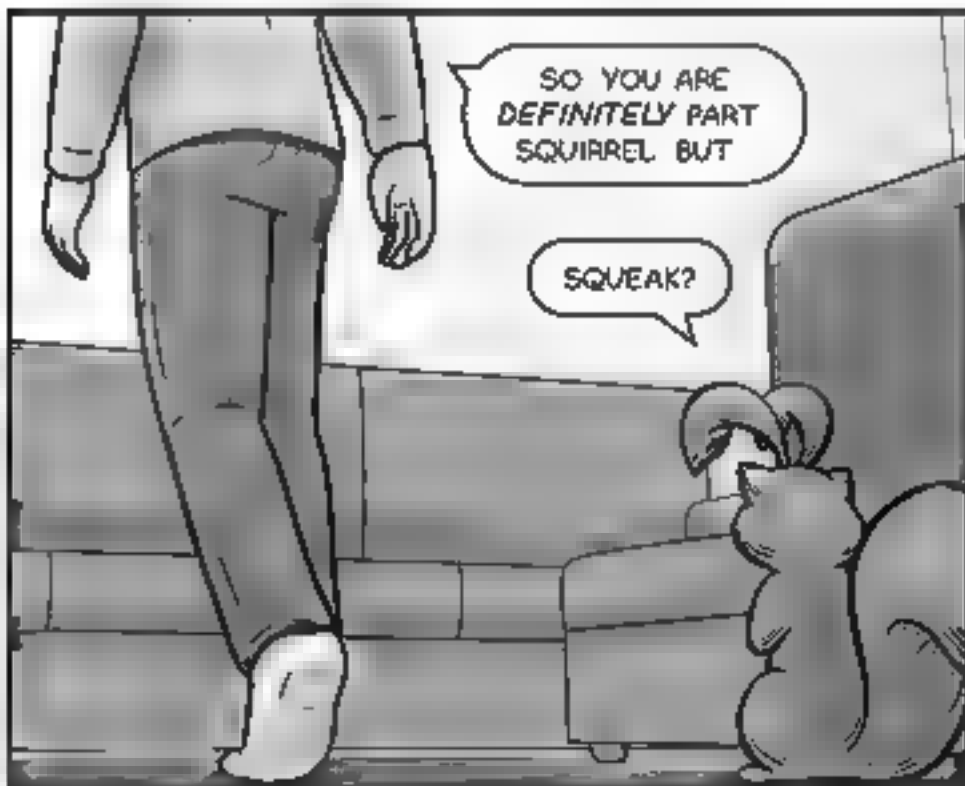


GAH!



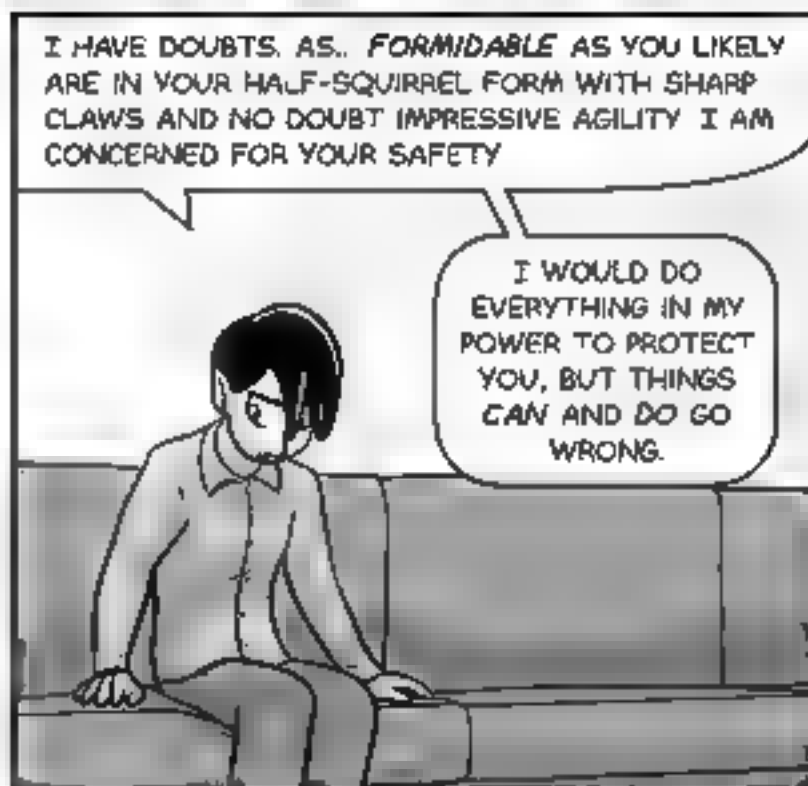
I WAS NOT AWARE FURRY SEYUNOLUS COULD CHANGE SO THOROUGHLY..

SQUEAK!



SO YOU ARE DEFINITELY PART SQUIRREL BUT

SQUEAK?



I HAVE DOUBTS. AS.. FORMIDABLE AS YOU LIKELY ARE IN YOUR HALF-SQUIRREL FORM WITH SHARP CLAWS AND NO DOUBT IMPRESSIVE AGILITY I AM CONCERNED FOR YOUR SAFETY

I WOULD DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO PROTECT YOU, BUT THINGS CAN AND DO GO WRONG.



A NORMAL-SIZED BOAR CAN RUN FAST ENOUGH. AND WITHOUT KNOWING THE EXACT TYPE OF GROWTH SPELL, WE MUST ASSUME *THIS* ONE CAN COVER EVEN MORE GROUND FASTER. YOUR BEING ABLE TO FLEE QUICKLY IS NOT ASSURANCE ENOUGH FOR--

I CAN DO MORE THAN THAT! I HAVE



GAH!

GAH! WHAT'S--



OH. DARN IT, THIS IS WHY I DUCKED BEHIND THE SOFA IN THE FIRST PLACE.



I'LL JUST UH...

SORRY!

THIS IS A DISASTER.

PERHAPS I SHOULD
JUST ASK HER
ABOUT DAMIEN.



WAIT WHY DON'T I JUST ASK
HER? SHE'S VOLUNTEERED
ENOUGH INFORMATION THAT I
CAN EXPLAIN WHY I WOULD
ASK SUCH A THING WITHOUT
EXPOSING NOAH SO PERHAPS I
REALLY SHOULD JUST ASK..



MR. RAVEN! YOU
CAN LOOK NOW!



GRACE, THIS MIGHT
SEEM LIKE AN ODD
QUESTION, BUT

HOW DO YOU LIKE ME NOW?!





MR. RAVEN? I'M SORRY IF THAT
WAS TOO SCARY MR. GREG
ENCOURAGES BEING DRAMATIC



SHE KILLED DAMIEN. SHE
COULD KILL TWELVE DAMIENS.
THOSE TWELVE DAMIENS
COULD MERGE TO FORM ONE
SUPER DAMIEN, AND SHE
COULD KILL THAT



ASSUMING DAMIEN
DIDN'T DO ANYTHING
TO *STARTLE* HER.

SIGH



H-HELLO?



HISS...







I AM SURPRISED YOU TOOK MAX'S APPEARANCE IN SUCH STRIDE. AT LEAST, ONCE YOU ACTUALLY SAW HIM.

HE'S JUST A KITTY. HISSING ISN'T THAT WEIRD, IS IT?



I WAS REFERRING TO THE SPINES ON HIS BACK.

WHY? ARE THOSE UNCOMMON?

YOU COULD SAY THAT.



CONGRATULATIONS. YOU HAVE SHOWN THAT YOU CAN COMMUNICATE WITH, AND CALM, AN UPSET ANIMAL. YOU HAVE ALSO DEMONSTRATED THAT YOU HAVE CONSIDERABLE POWER AT YOUR DISPOSAL.

YEP! THE POWER TO FLY! BOAR CAN'T GET ME IF I'M AIRBORNE, CAN HE?



WELL, NO, AND THAT'S GOOD, BUT I ALSO SENSE THAT YOU HAVE ACCESS TO AN IMMENSE AMOUNT OF POWER WHILE IN THAT FORM.

BUT YOU AREN'T DOING THE OOH-EE-OOH THING.



I NEVER SAY "OOH-EE-OOH", BUT I KNOW OF WHAT YOU REFER, AND I DON'T NEED TO DO THAT WHILE IN THIS FORM. MY POINTED EARS CAN TASTE YOUR POWER.

YOUR EARS... WHAT?



I AM CONVINCED THAT YOU CAN SAFELY ACCOMPANY ME, BUT THERE IS STILL ONE VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION THAT YOU MUST ANSWER.

WHAT'S THAT?



WHY DO YOU WANT TO SAVE THE BOAR?





I'M A YOUNG WOMAN WHO MAY OR MAY NOT BE SOME SORT OF HIPPIE, SO OF COURSE I WANT TO SAVE THE BOAR...

BUT YOU ONCE TOLD ME AND ELLEN ABOUT HOW YOU WERE SERIOUSLY INJURED WHILE OUT HUNTING BOAR.

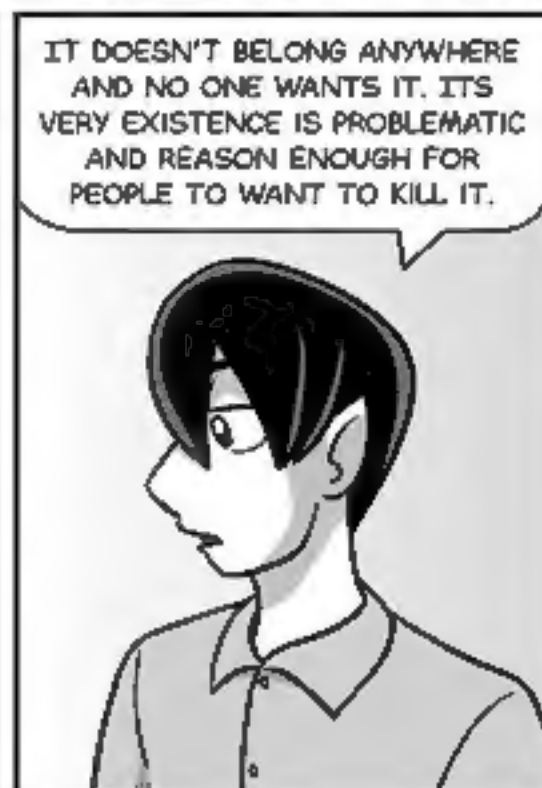


THAT DID ACTUALLY HAPPEN. THE INJURY STILL BOTHERING ME WAS BUT A PRETENSE FOR MY SWORD CANE, BUT I HAVE DONE A FAIR AMOUNT OF HUNTING. MOSTLY FOR FOOD, MIND YOU.

SO WHY DO YOU CARE?



...
THERE'S NO PLACE FOR IT.



IT DOESN'T BELONG ANYWHERE AND NO ONE WANTS IT. ITS VERY EXISTENCE IS PROBLEMATIC AND REASON ENOUGH FOR PEOPLE TO WANT TO KILL IT.



IT MAY NOT BE LOGICAL TO WANT TO SAVE SUCH A BEAST, BUT...

I PITY IT.



WOULD IT BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR ME TO HUG--

EXTREMELY.

OKAY.